The Lantern of the Path

Attributed to

Imam
Ja'far as-Sadiq



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

Lantern of the Path

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A collection of Hadith by the ۶th Imam on knowledge, behavior, remembrance, .prayer, and fear of God

Publisher's Note

Though there can be no doubt as to the truth and authenticity of the teachings contained in this book, it should be mentioned that there is some controversy whether the book was penned by the Imam ('a) himself. Both Allamah al-Majlisi and Allamah Hurr al-Amili felt that the book's division into ninety-nine chapters and its emphasis on inner meaning is a style more suited to Gnostic or Sufi scholars. Other scholars, however affirm that this was the work of the Imam ('a) himself, among them al-.Sayyid Ali Ibn at-Tawus, Shaykh al-Kaf'ami, and ash-Shahid Ath-Thani

In absence of unanimity, we can only say that "The Lantern of the Path" is generally .(attributed to Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq ('a

Translator's Note and Acknowledgements

This small and simple book was most difficult and complex to translate. The translation was begun four years ago by my father, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri ,when he translated "The Lantern of the Path" during some discourses. Though the task then fell to me to coordinate and execute the final translation, it was not without the .considerable help of several scholars that the final version was achieved

A formal translation was first done by Aisha Abdar-Rahman al-Tarjumana. Both hers and Sheikh Fadlallah's versions were used in translating it anew, throughout which Muhsim

p: ١

Muzaffar helped in unearthing the meaning of obscure words and phrases. This translation was subsequently reviewed and edited by both Asadullah adh-Dhakir Yate .and Christopher Flint

I am deeply grateful to all of them, not least for all that I learned in the process, .especially from my father

I sincerely hope that those who learn “The Lantern of the Path” it will open up inner .delights, as it has done for me

Muna H. Bilgrami

Introduction

The path of Islam contains a most comprehensive and total system of conduct for the wayfarer. The outer behaviour of a true Muslim reflects what is deep in his inner .consciousness

As creation is based on unity, tawhid as it is called in Arabic, every aspect of human experience reflects an aspect of unity. The Muslim is he who has submitted and surrendered in peace and knowledge to this wholesome and naturally balanced ecology. The outer courtesy of behaviour emanates from an inner equilibrium. Outer certainty emanates from inner submission and contentment. Outer nobility and courage emanate from inner awareness of the immense mercy and compassion of .the Creator

The outer behaviour, courtesies, practices and rituals of Islam are all manifestations of a subtler and finer inner conditioning, and the balanced fusion of the outer and the inner in the journey of this world. If there is an inner attribute there must be a .corresponding outer expression, which is a symptom of an inner attribute

In his teachings, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq shows the way to equilibrium in a most

inspired way of tawhid. As a man of insight and knowledge he sees the unified hand and demonstrates it to the sincere seeker. These teachings can be of benefit to anyone who has an interest in spiritual matters and is concerned with benefiting from .the path of Islam

The Imam's explanations in 'The Lantern of the Path' contain many levels of understanding. Much depends upon the state of the seeker and the extent of his sincerity. Although this book is small, its meanings are vast. We pray to Allah to .increase our knowledge and experience of His vast compassion and mercy

Fadhlallah Haeri

(Bondage ('Ubudiyah

The roots of conduct have four aspects: conduct with Allah, conduct with the self, conduct with creation (i.e. people), and conduct with this world. Each of these aspects is based upon seven principles, just as there are seven principles of conduct with Allah: giving Him His due, keeping His limits, being thankful for His gift, being content with His decree, being patient with His trials, glorifying His sanctity, and yearning for .Him

The seven principles of conduct with the self are fear, striving, enduring harm, spiritual discipline, seeking truthfulness and sincerity, withdrawing the self from what .(it loves, and binding it in poverty (faqr

The seven principles of conduct with creation are forbearance, forgiveness, humility, generosity, compassion, good counsel, justice and fairness.

The seven principles of conduct with this world are being content with what is at hand, preferring what is available to what is not, abandoning the quest for the

elusive, hating overabundance, choosing abstinence (zuhd), knowing the evils of this .world and abandoning any desire for it, and negating its dominance

When all these qualities are found in one person, he is then one of Allah's elite, one of ('His close bondsman and friends (awliya

More on Bondage

Bondage is an essence, the inner nature of which is lordship (rububiyah). Whatever is missing in bondage is found in lordship, and whatever is veiled from lordship is found ,in bondage. As Allah said

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient as regards your Lord (that He is a witness over all things? (۴۱:۵۳

This means He exists both in your absence and in your presence. Bondage means ridding oneself of everything, and the way to obtain this is to deny the self what it desires and to make it bear what it dislikes. The key to this is abandoning rest, loving .seclusion and following the path of recognition of the need for Allah

The Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Worship Allah as if you see Him. Even if you do not see Him, '.He sees you

The letters of the Arabic word for 'bondsman' ('abd) are three; 'ayn, ba' and dal. The ('ayn is one's knowledge ('ilm) of Allah. The ba' is one's distance (bawn

from other than Him, and the dal is one's nearness (dunuw) to Allah with the restriction of neither contingent qualities nor veil.

The principles of conduct have four aspects, as we mentioned at the beginning of the first chapter.

On Lowering the Gaze

There is nothing more gainful than lowering one's gaze, for the sight is not lowered from things, which Allah has forbidden unless the witnessing of majesty and glory has already come to the heart.

The Commander of the Faithful was asked what could help in lowering one's gaze. He said, 'Submission to the power of Him Who is aware of your secret. The eye is the spy of the hearts and the messenger of the intellect; therefore lower your gaze from whatever is not appropriate to your faith, from whatever your heart dislikes and from whatever your intellect finds repugnant.'

The Holy Prophet said, 'Lower your eyes and you will see wonders.'

Allah said,

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private (parts. (۲۴:۳۰

Isa (‘a) said to the disciples, 'Beware of looking at forbidden things, for that is the‘ '.seed of desire and leads to deviant behaviour

'.Yahya (‘a) said, 'I would prefer death to a glance which is unnecessary

Abdallah ibn Mas'ud said to a man who had visited a woman while she was ill, 'It' would have been better for you to lose your eyes than to have visited your sick '.person

Whenever the eye

looks at something forbidden, a knot of desire is tied in the person's heart, and that knot will only be untied by one of two conditions: either by weeping out of grief and regret in true repentance, or by taking possession of what one desired and looked at. And if a person takes possession unjustly, without repentance, then that will take him .to the Fire

As for the one who repents of it with grief and regret, his abode is the Garden and his .destiny is Allah's favour

On Walking

If you are intelligent, then you should be of firm resolution and sincere intention before you set out for any place, for surely the self's nature is to overstep the bounds and encroach on the forbidden. You should reflect when you walk, and take note of the wonders of Allah's work wherever you go. Do not be mocking, or strut when you ,walk; Allah said

وَلَا تَمْشِ فِى الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ...

(Do not go about in the land exulting overmuch. (۳۱:۱۸

Lower your gaze from whatever is inappropriate to faith, and remember Allah frequently. There is a tradition which says that those places where, and in connection with which, Allah is mentioned will testify to that before Allah on the Day of Judgement .and will ask forgiveness for those people so that Allah will let them enter the Garden

Do not speak excessively with people along the way, for that is bad manners. Most of the roads are the traps and markets of Satan, so do

not feel safe from his tricks. Make your coming and your going in obedience to Allah, striving for His pleasure, for all your movements will be recorded in your book, as Allah said,

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them regarding what they did, (۲۴:۲۴) and

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَآئِرَهُ فِى عُنُقِهِ

We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck. (۱۷:۱۳)

On Knowledge

Knowledge is the basis of every sublime state and the culmination of every high station. That is why the Holy Prophet said, 'It is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman, to seek knowledge,' that is, the knowledge of precaution (taqwa) and certainty. Imam 'Ali ('a) said, "Seek knowledge, though it be in China," meaning the knowledge of gnosis of the self, in it is contained knowledge of the Lord.

The Holy Prophet said, 'Whoever knows his own self knows his Lord; moreover, you should acquire that knowledge without which no action is correct, and that is sincerity

... We seek refuge with Allah from knowledge which has no benefit', that is, from .knowledge which is contrary to actions performed with sincerity

Know that a small amount of knowledge requires a great deal of action, because knowledge of the Hour requires the person who has such knowledge to act accordingly during his entire life. ‘Isa (‘a) said, 'I saw a stone on which was written, "Turn me over", so I turned

it over. Written on the other side was "Whoever does not act by what he knows will be doomed by seeking what he does not know, and his own knowledge will be turned against him." '

Allah revealed to David, 'The least that I shall do to someone with knowledge who does not act by his knowledge is worse than the seventy inner punishments which result in My removing from his heart the sweetness of My remembrance.' There is no way to Allah except via knowledge. And knowledge is the adornment of man in this world and the next, his driver to Paradise, and by means of it he attains Allah's contentment with him.

He who truly knows is the one in whom sound actions, pure supplications, truthfulness and precaution speak out; not his tongue, his debates, his comparisons, assertions or claims. In times other than these, those who sought knowledge were those who had intellect, piety, wisdom, modesty and caution; but nowadays we see that those who seek it do not have any of these qualities. The man of knowledge needs intellect, kindness, compassion, good counsel, forbearance, patience, contentment and generosity; while anyone wishing to learn needs a desire for knowledge, will, devotion (of his time and energy), piety, caution, memory and resolution.

Giving Judgement

Giving judgement is not permissible for someone who has not been endowed by Allah with the qualities of inner purity, sincerity in both his hidden and visible actions, and a proof from his Lord in every state.

This is because whoever has judged has decreed, and decree is only valid by the permission of Allah and by His proof. Whoever is liberal in his judgement, without having made a proper examination, is ignorant and will be taken to task for his ignorance and will be burdened with his judgement as the tradition indicates. .Knowledge is a light, which Allah casts into the heart of whomsoever He wills

The Holy Prophet said, 'Whoever is boldest among you in judging is also the most insolent to Allah'. Does not the judge know that he is the one who has come between Allah and His bondsmen, and that he is wavering between the Garden and the Fire? Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah said, 'How can anyone else benefit from my knowledge if I have denied myself its benefit?' It is inappropriate for anyone to judge on what is permissible (halal) and what is forbidden (haram) among creation, except for one who causes the people of his time, his village, and his city to follow the truth through obedience to the Holy Prophet and who recognizes what is applicable of his judgement. The Holy Prophet said, 'It is because giving judgement is such a ."tremendous affair, in which there is no place for "hopefully", "perhaps" or "may be

The Commander of the Faithful said to a judge, 'Do you know the difference between '?those verses of the Qur'an which abrogate and those which are abrogated

.'No'

Do you have a command of the intentions of Allah in'

'?the parables of the Qur'an

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

.'No'

Then you have perished and caused others to perish,' the Commander of the Faithful' .replied

A judge needs to know the various meanings of the Qur'an, the truth of the Prophetic way, the inward indications, courtesies, consensus and disagreements, and to be familiar with the bases of what they agree upon and disagree about. Then he must have acute discrimination, sound action, wisdom, and precaution. If he has these .things, then let him judge

Enjoining what is Good and Forbidding what is Evil

Whoever has not thrown off his anxieties, been purified of the evils of his self and its appetites, defeated Satan, and entered under the guardianship of Allah and the security of His protection, cannot properly enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; and since he has not attained these aforementioned qualities, whatever affair he tackles in attempting to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil will be a proof .against him, and people will not benefit from it

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

(Allah said, What! Do you enjoin men to be good and neglect your own souls? (۲:۴۴

Anyone who does that is called upon thus: Oh- traitor! Do you demand from My creation that which you have rejected for yourself and have slackened the reins [in ?this regard] upon yourself

:It is related that Tha'labah al-Asadi asked the Messenger of Allah about this verse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لاَ يَضُرُّكُم مَّن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ

O you who believe! Take care of your souls; he who

(errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right way. (5:105

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and be forbearing in whatever afflicts you, until such time when you see meanness obeyed and passions followed, and when everyone will have conceit about their own opinion, then you should concern yourself only with yourself, and ignore the affairs of the common people.'

A person who enjoins what is good needs to be knowledgeable about what is permissible and what is forbidden; he must be free from his personal inclinations regarding what he enjoins and forbids, give good counsel to people, be merciful and compassionate to them, and call them with gentleness in a very clear manner, while recognizing their different characters so that he can put each in his proper place.

He must see the intrigues of the self and the machinations of Satan. He must be patient in whatever befalls him, and must not seek compensation from people for that which he instructs them in, nor complain about them. He should not make use of vehemence or passion. He should not become angry for his own sake. He should make his intention purely for Allah, and seek His help and desire Him. But if people oppose him and are harsh to him, he must be patient; and if they agree with him and accept his verdict, he must be thankful, entrusting his affair to Allah and looking to his own faults.

How the Men of Knowledge are Ruined

Caution and

fear are the legacy of knowledge and its measure; knowledge is the ray of gnosis and the heart of belief. Whoever is denied caution is not a man of knowledge, even if he can split hairs in dealing with obscure items of knowledge. Allah said,

...إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ....

(Only those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah. (۳۵:۲۸)

Men of knowledge are ruined by eight things: greed and miserliness, showing off and partisanship, love of praise, delving into things whose reality they cannot reach, affectation by taking excessive pains to beautify their speech with superfluous expressions, lack of modesty before Allah, boastfulness, and not acting upon what they know.

Isa (‘a) said, 'The most wretched of all people is he who is known for his knowledge,‘ not for his actions.'

The Holy Prophet said, 'Do not sit with every presumptuous caller who summons you from certainty to doubt, from sincerity to showing off, from humility to pride, from good counsel to enmity, and from abstinence to desire. Draw near to the person with knowledge, who summons you from pride to humility, from showing off to sincerity, from doubt to certainty, from desire to abstinence, from enmity to good counsel.' None are fit to preach to creation except that person who has gone beyond these evils by his truthfulness. He sees the faults of speech and knows what is sound from what is unsound, the defectiveness of thoughts, and the temptations of the self and his fancies.

Ali said, 'Be like'

the kind, compassionate doctor who places the remedy where it will be of benefit.' They asked 'Isa ('a), 'With whom shall we sit, O Spirit of Allah?' 'With one the sight of whom reminds you of Allah,' he replied, 'and whose speech increases you in '.knowledge, and whose actions make you desire the next world

(Guarding Oneself (Ri'ayah

Whoever guards his heart from heedlessness, protects his self from appetites, and guards his intellect from ignorance, will be admitted into the company of the vigilant. Then he who guards his knowledge from fancies, his faith from innovation, and his .property from the forbidden is among the righteous

The Messenger of Allah said, 'It is a duty for every Muslim, man and woman, to seek knowledge,' that is, knowledge of the self. Therefore it is necessary for the self to be in all states either expressing his gratitude or proffering his excuse for lack of gratitude. If this is acceptable to Allah it is a favour upon him, and if not it is justice upon him. For every self it is necessary to work that it may succeed in its acts of .obedience, and for its protection in its efforts to abstain from doing harm

The basis of all this is recognition of total need and dependence on Allah, caution and obedience. The key to it is in delegating your affair to Allah, cutting off expectation by always remembering death, and seeing that you are standing in the presence of the All compelling. This gives you

rest from confinement, rescue from the enemy, and peace for the self. The means to sincerity in obedience is harmony, and the root of that rests upon considering life as .being only as long as a day

The Messenger of Allah said, 'This world lasts but an hour, so spend it in obedience to Allah.' The door to all of this is always to withdraw from the world by means of constant reflection. The means to this withdrawal is contentment, and abandoning such existential matters as do not concern you. The means to reflection is emptiness [desirelessness], and the buttress of emptiness is abstinence. The completion of abstinence is precaution, and the door to precaution is fear. The proof of fear is glorification of Allah, adherence to obeying His commands with sincerity, fear and caution, and holding back from the forbidden; and the guide to this is knowledge. ,Almighty Allah said

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاء

(Those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah.(۳۵:۲۸

Thankfulness

With every breath you take, a thanksgiving is incumbent upon you, indeed, a thousand thanks or more. The lowest level of gratitude is to see that the blessing comes from Allah irrespective of the cause for it, and without the heart being attached to that cause. It consists of being satisfied with what is given; it means not disobeying Him with regard to His blessing, or opposing Him in any of His commands .and prohibitions because of His blessing

in every way, and you will find that Allah is a generous Lord in every way. If there were a way of worshipping Allah for His sincerest bondsman to follow more excellent than giving thanks at every instance, He would have ascribed to them the name of this worship above the rest of creation. Since there is no form of worship better than that, He has singled out this kind of worship from other kinds of worship, and has ,singled out those who practise this kind of worship, saying

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ

(Very few of my servants are grateful. (۳۴:۱۳

Complete thankfulness is to sincerely repent your inability to convey the least amount of gratitude, and expressing this by means of your sincere glorification of Allah. This is because fitting thanks is itself a blessing bestowed upon the bondsman for which he must also give thanks; it is of greater merit and of a higher state than the original blessing which caused him to respond with thanks in the first place. Therefore, every time one gives thanks one is obliged to give yet greater thanks, and so on ad infinitum, and this while absorbed in His blessings and unable to achieve the ultimate state of gratitude. For how can the bondsman match with gratitude the blessings of Allah, and when will he match his own action with Allah's while all along the bondsman ?is weak and has no power whatsoever, except from Allah

Allah is not in need of the obedience of His

bondsmen, for He has the power to increase blessings forever. Therefore be a .grateful bondsman to Allah, and in this manner you will see wonders

On Leaving your Home

When you leave your home, do it as if you will never return. Leave only for the sake of obedience to Allah or for the sake of the faith. Remain tranquil and dignified in your .bearing, and remember Allah both secretly and openly

One of the companions of Abu Dharr asked a member of Abu Dharr's household where he was and she said, 'He has gone out.' When the man asked when Abu Dharr would return, she replied, 'When he returns is in the hands of someone else,' for he .has no power on his own

Learn from Allah's creation, both the pious and the deviants, wherever you go. Ask Allah to place you among His sincere and truthful bondsmen, and to join you to those of them who have passed on and to gather you in their company. Praise Him, and give thanks for the appetites He has made you avoid, and the ugly actions of the wrongdoers from which He has protected you. Lower your gaze from carnal appetites and forbidden things, and pursue the right course on your journey. Be vigilant, fearing Allah at every step, as if you were crossing the straight path. Do not be distracted. Offer a greeting to His people, both giving it first and answering with it. Give help to those who ask for it in a righteous

.cause, guide those who are lost and ignore the ignorant

When you return to your home, enter it as a corpse enters the grave, its only concern .being to receive the mercy and forgiveness of Allah

On Reciting the Qur'an

Whoever recites the Qur'an and does not humble himself before Allah, whose heart is not softened, nor regret and fear provoked within him, undervalues the immensity of .Allah's affair and is in a clear state of loss

The person who recites the Qur'an needs three things: a fearful heart, a tranquil and receptive body, and an appropriate place to recite. When his heart fears Allah, then ,the accursed Satan flees from him. As Allah said

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

(When you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaytan. (١۶:٩٨

When he frees himself of all attachments, then his heart is devoted to recitation, and nothing impedes him from obtaining the blessing of the light of the Qur'an and its benefits. When he finds an empty place and withdraws from people, having acquired the two qualities of humility of heart and tranquility of body, then his soul and his

innermost being will feel communion with Allah, and he will discover the sweetness of how Allah speaks to His right-acting bondsmen, how He shows His gentleness, to them and singles them out for all the varieties of His marks of honour and wondrous signs. If he drinks a cup of this drink, he will never prefer any other state to this nor

any other moment to this. He will prefer this to every act of obedience and devotion, .since it contains intimate conversation with the Lord, without any intermediary

So beware of how you read the Book of your Lord, the guardian to whom you aspire, how you respond to His commands and avoid His prohibitions, and how you observe His limits, for it is a mighty Book: Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from ,behind it

تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

(a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One. (۴۱:۴۲

Therefore recite it in an orderly manner and contemplatively and adhere to the limits of His promise and His threat. Reflect on its examples and warnings. Beware of paying undue respect to the recitation of its letters while failing to observe the legal limits .contained therein

Dress

The best adornment of the believer's garment is precaution and the most blessed ,garment is belief. As Allah said

وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىَ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ

(And clothing that guards [against evil]; that is best. (۷:۲۶

Outward dress is a blessing from Allah in order to preserve the modesty of the sons of Adam; it is a mark of honour which Allah has given to the descendants of Adam. He did not give that honour to any other creature; it is given to the believers as a means of carrying out their obligations. Your best garments are those which do not distract you from Allah, those garments, in fact, which bring you closer to remembrance of Him, and gratitude and obedience

to Him. They do not, however, move you to pride, conceit, pretence, boastfulness or arrogance: those things are the scourge of the faith, and their legacy is hardness of .heart

When you put on your clothes, remember that Allah veils your wrong actions with His mercy. You should clothe your inward part as you clothe your outward part with your garment. Let your inward truth be veiled in awe of Allah, and let your outward truth be veiled in obedience. Take heed of the overflowing favour of Allah, since He created the means to make garments for covering physical immodesty and opened the gates for repentance, regret, and seeking succour, in order to veil the inward parts, and .their wrong actions and bad character

Do not expose anyone's faults when Allah has concealed worse things in yourself. Occupy yourself with your own faults, and overlook matters and situations which do not concern you. Beware lest you exhaust your life in other people's actions and exchange your irreplaceable endowed wealth with someone else, thereby destroying yourself. Forgetting wrong actions brings about the greatest punishments of Allah in this world, and is the most ample cause for punishment in the next. So long as the bondsman occupies himself with obeying Allah, with recognizing his own faults and leaving alone whatever might devalue faith in Allah, he is spared ruin and is immersed .in the sea of Allah's mercy, attaining the gems and the benefits of wisdom and clarity

But as long as he forgets his

own wrong actions, is ignorant of his own faults, and falls back on his power and .strength, he will never be successful

Showing Off

Do not show off your actions to someone who neither gives life nor causes death, and who cannot take away from you your burdens. Showing off is a tree whose only fruit is hidden association of other gods with Allah, and its root is hypocrisy. The vain one will be told on the Day of Judgement; 'Take what you consider to be the reward of your actions from those you took as your partners with Me. Look to those whom you worshipped and called on, from whom you entertained hopes and whom you feared. And know that you cannot conceal anything inside of you from Allah: you will be '.deceived by yourself

,Allah said

يُخَادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves (and they do not perceive. (۲:۹

Showing off most frequently occurs in the way people glance at others, speak, eat, drink, arrive somewhere, sit with others, dress, laugh, and in the way they perform .prayers, pilgrimage, jihad, recitation of the Qur'an, and all outward acts of devotion

However, he who is sincere towards Allah, who fears Him in his heart, and who sees himself as lacking even after he has exerted himself with every effort, will find that

Allah is contented with him as a result, and he will be among those whom one

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expects to be free from showing off and hypocrisy, provided he continues to be in that .state

Truthfulness

Truthfulness is a light which radiates its reality in its own world: it is like the sun, from whose reality everything seeks light without any decrease occurring in this reality. A truthful person, in fact, is a man who believes every liar, due to the reality of his own truthfulness. It means that nothing which is opposed to truthfulness, nothing, even, which is not truthfulness, is permitted to coexist with it; just as happened with Adam, who believed Iblis when he lied because Iblis had sworn a false oath to him and there ,was no lying in Adam. Allah said

وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا

(We did not find in him any determination. (۲۰:۱۱۵

because Iblis originated something previously unknown, both outwardly and inwardly. Iblis will be gathered with his lie, and he will never benefit from the truthfulness of .Adam

Yet it benefited Adam that he believed the lie of Iblis, as Allah testified for him when He said that he was not constant in what was contrary to his custom. This really .means that his being chosen was not at all diminished by Satan's lies

Truthfulness is the attribute of the truthful. The reality of truthfulness demands that Allah purify His bondsman, as He mentioned regarding the truthfulness ‘Isa (‘a) on the

Day of Reckoning. He indicated it by referring to the guiltlessness of the truthful men ,of the community of Muhammad, saying

هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ

p: ٢١

صِدْقُهُمْ

(This is the day when their truth shall benefit the truthful ones. (٥:١١٩

The Commander of the Faithful' said, 'Truthfulness is the sword of Allah in His heaven and earth: it cuts everything it touches.' If you want to know whether you are truthful or lying, then look into the truthfulness of what you mean and the conclusion of your claim. Then gauge them both according to a scale from Allah, as if you were present ,on the Day of Resurrection. Allah said

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ

(And measuring out on that day will be just. (٧:٨

If there is balance and harmony in what you mean, then your claim is successful, and your truthfulness is in the fact that the tongue does not differ from the heart, nor the heart from the tongue. The truthful person with this description is like the angel who ?draws out his soul; if the soul is not drawn out, then what is it to do

Sincerity

Sincerity lies in all distinguished actions: it is a notion that starts with acceptance and ends with Allah's pleasure. Therefore he whose actions Allah accepts and with whom He is content is the sincere one, even if his actions are few. Whoever does not have his actions accepted is not sincere, even if his actions are many, as we can see when .we consider what happened with Adam and Iblis, may he be cursed

The sign of acceptance is the existence of integrity and correctness, by expending all that is desirable with accurate

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awareness of every movement and stillness. In upholding what he has, the self of the sincere one is consumed, and his life is spent so as to put what he has in order, unifying knowledge and action, the doer and what is done by the action. For if he has attained that, he has attained all, and if he misses it he misses all; and that is brought .about by purifying the meanings of disassociation (tanzih) in His unity

As the first Imam said, 'Those who act will perish, except for those who worship; those who worship will perish except for those who know; those who know will perish except for those who are truthful; those who are truthful will perish except for those are sincere; those who are sincere will perish except for those who have precaution; those who have precaution will perish except for those who have certainty, and those ,who have certainty are of exalted character.' As Allah said

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

(And serve your Lord until there comes to you that which is certain. (١٥:٩٩

The lowest level of sincerity is when the bondsman exerts himself as much as he can, and then does not consider his action to have any worth with Allah so that he does not make his Lord recompense him for his actions according to his knowledge, for if Allah asks him to fulfill the full duties of slave hood ('ubudiyah) he would be unable to do so. The lowest station of the

sincere person in the world is safety from all wrong actions, to be rescued from the Fire and to win the Garden in the next world.

Precaution

Precaution (taqwa) has three facets:

١. Precaution by dependence on Allah, which means leaving behind contradiction and going beyond any shade of doubt, and this is the precaution exercised by the highest.

٢. The precaution of Allah, which means to abandon all doubtful matters and to leave the forbidden (haram) alone; this is the precaution of the elite.

٣. The precaution of the Fire and Punishment, which results in leaving alone what is forbidden; this is the precaution of the general public.

Precaution is like water flowing in a river. The three levels of precaution are like trees of every colour and variety planted on the bank of that river, each tree absorbing water from that river according to its essence, capacity, delicateness and thickness.

Then the benefits, which creatures take from these trees and fruits, are according to their value and worth. Allah said,

وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاء وَاحِدٍ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِى الأُكُلِ

Palm trees having one root and [others] having distinct roots - they are watered with (one water, and We make some of them excel others in fruit. (۱۳:۴

Precaution in acts of obedience to Allah is like water for the trees, and the natures of the trees and their fruits in their colours and tastes are like the measures of belief. Whoever has the highest degree in belief and the purest nature

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with respect to the soul has the greatest precaution. He who is precautious has the purer and more sincere worship: whoever is like that is nearer to Allah.

But every act of devotion that is founded on something other than precaution comes to nothing. Allah said,

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنَ اللّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَم مَّنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىَ شَفَا جُرُفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ

Is he, therefore, better who laid his foundation on fear of Allah and [His] good pleasure, or he who laid his foundation on the edge of a cracking, hollowed bank, so it broke down with him into the fire of Hell? (٩:١٠٩)

The explanation of precaution is to avoid entering an affair which contains no harm simply out of fear of one which does. It is, in reality, obedience without rebellion, remembrance without forgetfulness, knowledge without ignorance, and it is accepted by Allah and not rejected.

Fearing Allah

Close the gates of your limbs and senses to all that will harm your heart, remove your standing with Allah, and bring in its wake grief and regret on the Day of Judgement and shame about the evil actions you committed.

The scrupulous person must have three principles: he should overlook the faults of all .people, he should avoid offending them, and he should balance censure with praise

The basis of fearing Allah is to constantly take the self to account, to be truthful in one's words and pure in one's transactions, to leave every doubtful thing, to abandon every defect

and doubt, to separate oneself from all which does not concern you and not to open .doors which you will not know how to close

Do not sit with anyone who obscures what is clear for you, nor with someone who takes the faith lightly. Do not question knowledge which your heart has no capacity for, and which you will not understand, of whoever said it, and cut off anyone who .cuts you off from Allah

Social Interactions

Courteous social relations with Allah's creation while avoiding all acts of disobedience to Him is a sign of Allah's excessive generosity with His bondsman. Whoever is sincere and humble before Allah in his innermost being will have good social interaction .externally

Keep company with people for the sake of Allah and do not keep company merely for your own share of worldly affairs, for seeking rank, showing off, or for reputation. Do not fall below the limits of the shari'ah for the sake of social intercourse, such as trying to keep up with others, or gaining a reputation, for these things cannot make up for you, and you will miss the next world, with no recourse. Treat someone who is older than you as you would your father, someone who is younger than you as you would a son. Treat your peer as you would a brother. Do not abandon what you know to be certain within yourself for something heard from other people which you doubt. Be gentle when you enjoin good, and compassionate

.when you forbid evil

,Never abandon good counsel in any circumstance. As Allah said

وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً

(Speak to men good words. (۲:۸۳

Cut yourself off from what makes you forget to remember Allah, when temptation distracts you from obedience to Him, for that comes from the friends and helpers of Satan. Do not allow the sight of them to move you to dissimulation with the truth, for .that would be a terrible loss indeed. We seek refuge with Almighty Allah

Sleep

Sleep the sleep of the mindful, do not sleep the sleep of the heedless. For the mindful .among the astute sleep only for rest, and do not purposely sleep through laziness

The Holy Prophet said, 'My eyes sleep, but my heart does not.' When you go to sleep, have the intention to lighten your burden on the angels and disengage the self from its appetites, and to examine yourself by your sleep; be aware of the fact that you are incapable and weak. You have no power over any of your movements and stillnesses, except by the judgement and measure of Allah. Know that sleep is the brother of death. Use it as a guide to death, for there is no way to wake up in death or to return to correct action once you have missed it. Whoever sleeps through an obligatory,

recommended or supererogatory prayer is at fault, and his sleep is the sleep of the .heedless and the path of the losers; he is at fault

Whoever sleeps after he

has discharged his duties concerning obligatory and recommended prayers, and has carried out his responsibilities, sleeps a praiseworthy sleep. I do not know of anything that is safer than sleep for the people of our times who have attained these qualities: this is because people have ceased to guard their faith and to take care in observing their conduct. They have taken the left-hand path. When a sincere bondsman strives not to speak out of place, how can he avoid hearing that which would prevent him from not speaking unless there is a safeguard? Sleep is one such safeguard. As Allah said,

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولـئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْؤُولاً

Surely, the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that. (۱۷:۳۶)

In excess sleep there are many evils, even if it is done in the way we have mentioned. Too much sleep is brought about by excess drink, and excess drinking is brought about being excessively satiated. Both of these things weigh heavily on the self to keep it from obedience, and they harden the heart from reflection and humility.

Make your sleep your last affair in this world; remember Allah with your heart and your tongue. Let your obedience to Allah overpower your wrong doings and seek help from Him while you sleep, fasting until the morning prayer, since if you are awakened at night, Satan whispers to you, 'Sleep again, you still have a long night,' for he wants you to miss the time

of intimate contemplation and exposure of your state before your Lord. Do not be distracted in seeking forgiveness at dawn, for at that time there is much yearning for .those in devoted supplication

Pilgrimage

If you intend to go on pilgrimage, before resolving on it devote your heart to Allah, stripping it of every preoccupation and every barrier between you and Allah. Entrust all your affairs to your Creator; rely on Him in all your actions and moments of stillness. Surrender to His decree, decision and judgement. Abandon this world, repose, and all creation. Perform those duties which you are bound to fulfill for other people. Do not rely on your provisions, the animal you ride, your companions, your food, your youth nor your wealth, for fear that they will become your enemies and be harmful to you; in this way you will realize that there is no power, no strength, nor .might except by the guardianship of Allah and His granting of success

Prepare for the pilgrimage as someone who does not hope to return. Keep good company, and be diligent in observing all your obligations to Allah and the prophetic practices. Take care to show courtesy, endurance, patience, thankfulness, compassion, and generosity, always putting others before yourself at all times, even those who reject you. Then perform an ablution with the water of sincere repentance for wrong actions; put on the robe of truthfulness, purity, humility and fear. By donning the garments of pilgrimage, withhold yourself from everything which

hinders you from remembering Allah, or that will impede you from showing obedience .to Him

Fulfill His call with an answer whose meaning is clear, pure and sincere when you call on Him, holding on firmly to your belief in Him. Circumambulate with your heart along with the angels who circumambulate the Throne, just as you circumambulate with the Muslims who go around the Ka'aba. Hasten as you run in flight from your passion, freeing yourself of all your personal assumptions of strength and power. Leave your heedlessness and errors behind when you go out to Mina; do not desire what is unlawful for you and what you do not deserve. Confess your errors at Arafat: set out your contract with Allah by His Oneness, draw near to Him and fear Him at Muzdalifah. Climb with your soul to the highest assembly when you climb the .mountain of Arafat. Slit the throat of passion and greed in the sacrifice

Stone your appetites, baseness, vileness, and blameworthy actions when you stone the Pillar of Aqabah. Shave off your outward and inward faults when you shave your hair. Enter into the security of Allah, His protection, His veil, His shelter and His watchfulness and abandon the pursuit of your desires by entering the Sacred Precinct. Visit the House, and walk around it to glorify its Master, His wisdom, His majesty and His power. Embrace the Stone, being content with His decree and humble before His might. Leave everything that is other than Him

in the valedictory circumambulation. Purify your soul and your innermost being for the meeting with Allah, on the day when you will meet Him when standing on Safa'.

Take on valour and courtesy from Allah by annihilating your attributes at Marwah. Be consistent in the conditions of your pilgrimage and fulfill the contract you have made with your Lord, by which you will have obliged yourself to Him on the Day of Judgement. Know that Allah made the pilgrimage obligatory, and singled it out from all the acts of worship in respect of Himself when He said,

وَلِلّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلاً

Pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, and [upon] everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it. (٣:٩٧)

The Holy Prophet established the organization of the rituals of pilgrimage as preparation for, and an indication of, death, the grave, the resurrection and the Day of Judgement. In this lesson for mankind he discriminates between those who will enter the Garden and those who will enter the Fire, through his demonstrating the pilgrimage rites from beginning to end to those with intelligence and prudence.

Charity

Obligatory charity for the sake of Allah is due from every single part of your body, even from every root of your hair. In fact, charity is due for every instant of your life.

Charity of the eye means looking with consideration and averting the gaze from desires and things similar to them. Charity of the ear

means listening to the best of sounds, such as wisdom, the Qur'an, the benefits of the faith contained in warnings and good counsel, and to that in which your salvation lies, and by avoiding their opposite, such as lies, slander, and similar things.

Charity of the tongue means to give good counsel to the Muslims, to awaken those who are heedless, and to give abundant glorification and remembrance (dhikr), and other, similar things.

Charity of the hand means spending money on others, to be generous with Allah's blessings to you, to use it in writing down knowledge and information by means of which other Muslims will benefit in obedience to Allah, and to restrain the hand from evil. Charity of the foot means to hasten to carry out one's duty to Allah by visiting virtuous people, assemblies of remembrance (dhikr), putting things right between people, maintaining ties of kinship, engaging in jihad, and doing things which will make your heart sound and your faith correct.

We have mentioned here just some of the ways of zakat, namely, those understood by the heart and those the self can deal with; although there are others too numerous to mention, mastered by no one but His sincere and intimate bondsmen. Indeed, these latter are the lords of zakat and to them belongs its mark of distinction. Oh Allah, give me success in what You love and in what makes You content.

Intention

The person who has a sincere intention is the one who has a sound

heart; because a sound heart, free from thoughts about forbidden things, comes .from making your intention purely for Allah in all matters

يَوْمَ لَا يَنفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ. إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

The day on which neither property will avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah (with a heart free [from evil]. (۲۶:۸۸-۹

The Holy Prophet said, 'The intention of the believer is better than his action,' and also, 'Actions are by intentions, and every man will obtain what he had intended.' The slave of Allah must therefore have sincere intention in every moment of action and stillness because then he will not be heedless. Those who are heedless have been :censured by Allah

إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

(They are nothing but as cattle; nay, they are straying farther off from the path. (۲۵:۴۴

أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

(These are the heedless ones. (۷:۱۷۹

Intention appears from the heart, according to the purity of knowledge. It varies as belief varies, at different moments in its strength and weakness. The selfishness and passion of those with sincere intention is subjugated to the power of the glorification

of Allah and modesty before Him. He is by his nature, his appetites and his own .desires, in a state of discomfort, and yet people find ease at his hand

Remembrance

He who truly remembers Allah is the one who obeys Him: whoever forgets is disobedient. Obedience is the mark of guidance, disobedience the sign of misguidance. The root of both states lies in remembrance

dhikr) and forgetfulness. Make your heart the focal point of your tongue, which) should not move unless the heart indicates, the intellect agrees and your tongue .accords with belief. Almighty Allah knows what you conceal and what you reveal

Be like someone who has shed his soul from his body, or like someone who is attending the great parade on the Day of Reckoning, not distracting yourself from the obligations which your Lord has laid on you in His commands and prohibitions, His promise and His threat. Do not be occupied with yourself rather than with the duties laid down for you by your Lord. Wash your heart clean with the water of sorrow and fear; make remembrance of Allah part of His most glorious remembrance of you. He remembers you, but He does not need you. His remembrance of you is more glorious, more desirable, more praiseworthy, a more complete and more ancient than your .remembrance of Him

The knowledge you obtain by His remembrance of you will beget you humility, modesty and contrition, which will in turn be the cause of your witnessing His nobility and previous, overflowing favour. The latter will then belittle your obedience in your own eyes, however copious it may be as a result of His favours; and you will be sincerely devoted to Him. But your consciousness and esteem of your own remembrance of Him will lead to showing off, pride, foolishness and coarseness in your character, for it means attaching too much importance to

your obedience while forgetting His overflowing favour and generosity. It will only make you more distant from Him, and all that you will acquire with the passing of the days is alienation.

There are two sorts of remembrance: sincere remembrance with which the heart is in harmony, and remembrance which arises through banishing any remembrance of other than Allah. As the Messenger of Allah said, 'I cannot do justice in properly praising You as You praise Yourself.' The Messenger of Allah did not set any limit on remembering Allah, since he knew the truth that Allah's remembrance of His bondsman was greater than the bondsman's remembrance of Him. Thus it is even more fitting that whoever comes after the Holy Prophet should not set any limits, and whoever wants to remember Allah should know that as long as Allah does not remember the bondsman by granting him success in remembering Him, that bondsman will not be able to remember Him.

The Ruin of the Reciters

Someone who recites without knowledge is like a vain man who has neither property nor wealth; for people do not hate someone for his lack of possessions, but they detest him for his vanity. He is always at odds with creation in that which is not obligatory upon him, and he who contests creation in what he is not commanded to do is contesting the process of creativity and absolute lordship.

As Allah said,

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِى اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ

Among men is he who disputes

p: ۳۵

in respect of Allah though having no knowledge, nor guidance, nor a book giving light. ((۳۱:۲۰

None will have a harsher punishment than someone who claims a right to the mantle .of knowledge without having either the truth or the meaning of it

Zayd ibn Thabit said to his son, 'My son, do not let Allah see your name in the register of the vain reciters.' And the Holy Prophet said, 'A time will come for my community in which hearing the name of the man who recites will be considered better than studying, and studying will be considered better than doing the thing with experience ... The greatest number of hypocrites in my community are among the reciters of the '.Qur'an

Be where the faith recommends you to be, and where you are commanded to be. Conceal your inner state from other people as much as you can. Make your acts of obedience to Allah have the same relationship as your soul has to your body, so they become an indication of the state you have attained between yourself and your Originator. Seek Allah's help in all your affairs, and beseech Allah humbly at the end of ,the night and at the end of the day. Allah said

ادْعُواْ رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly; surely He does not love those who exceed the (limits. (۷:۵۵

Transgressing is one of the attributes, indeed, one of the hallmarks, of the reciters of our time. Be fearful of Allah

.in all your affairs, so that you do not fall into the arena of desire and destroy yourself

Clarification of Truth and Falsehood

Fear Allah and be where you wish to be among any people you choose to be. There is no conflict for anyone in a state of precaution. Precaution is desirable for all parties; in it is gathered all goodness and maturity. It is the measure of all knowledge and wisdom, of every accepted act of obedience. Precaution is the water which gushes out from the spring of Allah's gnosis: every branch of knowledge is in need of it. It does not need any confirmation of knowing how to be still in awe of Allah and His power. Increase in precaution comes from Allah's acquainting His bondman's secret .with His subtle mercy: this is the root of every truth

Falsehood is whatever cuts you off from Allah- every group agrees on this also. .Therefore avoid falsehood, devoting your secret to Allah without any attachment

The Messenger of Allah said, 'The truest words that the Bedouins spoke are the words of Labid when he said, ‘Indeed everything but Allah is false And every blessing '.is most certainly ephemeral

So cling to what is agreed upon by people of purity, piety and precaution in the roots of the faith, the realities of certainty, Allah's pleasure, and submission. Do not enter into disagreement and disputations among people, for then things will become difficult for you. The chosen community has agreed that Allah is One and that there is

nothing like Him; and that He is just in His judgement, does whatever He wishes, and governs what He wills. One does not ask 'why?' about anything of His making. There has not been and will never be anything that is not according to His will and desire; He has the power to do what He wills, and He is true in His promise and His threat.

The Qur'an is His word, and it existed before phenomenal being, place and time. The creation of phenomenal beings and their annihilation are the same with Him: their creation did not increase His knowledge, nor will their passing decrease His kingdom. His power is mighty and He is majestic, glory be to Him.

If someone brings to you anything which falls short of this fundamental truth, do not accept it. Devote your inward being to that and you will see its blessings close at hand. You will be among the victors.

The Gnosis of the Prophets

Allah has provided His Prophets from the treasures of His subtlety, generosity, and mercy. He has taught them from the wealth of His knowledge, and He has singled them out for Himself from among all creation. No one from the entire creation possesses a state or character similar to theirs, for He has made them the means for all creatures to come to Him.

He made obedience to and love for them the cause of His contentment, and opposition to them and rejection of them a cause for His wrath. He commanded all peoples

and groups to follow the religion of their Messenger, rejecting any obedience other than by means of obedience to them, praise of them, recognition of their love, respect and veneration for them, esteem for them and deference to them, and rank with .Allah

Therefore glorify all the prophets of Allah, and do not place them in the same position as anyone inferior to them. Do not exercise your intellect regarding their stations, states, and character unless it is by a precise clarification from Allah, and a consensus of the people who have insight into the proofs which affirm their virtues and ranks. How can you arrive at the reality of what they have from Allah? If you compare their words and actions with any of the people below them, you will be a bad companion to them; you will have disclaimed their gnosis in ignorance of their being specially selected by Allah, and you will have dropped below the level of the truths of belief and .gnosis. So take care, and take care again

The Recognition of the Imams

It is related with a sound chain of authority from Salman al- Farsi, 'I visited the ,Messenger of Allah who looked at me and said

O Salman, Allah does not send a prophet or messenger unless there are with him" ".twelve chiefs

".O Messenger of Allah, I know this from the people of the two books"

O Salman, do you know my twelve chiefs, whom Allah has chosen to be leaders after"

"?me

".Allah and His Messenger know best"

,O Salman"

p: ٣٩

Allah created me from the quintessence of light, and called me, so I obeyed Him. Then He created 'Ali from my light, and called him, and he obeyed. From my light and the light of 'Ali He created Fatimah: He called her and she obeyed. From me, 'Ali and Fatimah, He created al-Hasan and al-Husayn. He called them and they obeyed Him. Allah has named us with five of His names: Allah is al-Mahmud (the Praised) and I am Muhammad (worthy of praise); Allah is al-'Ali (the High), and this is 'Ali (the one of high rank); Allah is al-Fatir (Creator out of nothing), and this is Fatimah; Allah is the One with Hasan (beneficence), and this is Hasan; Allah is Muhassin (the Beautiful), and this is Husayn. He created nine Imams from the light of al-Husayn and called them and they obeyed Him, before Allah created either Heaven on high, the outstretched earth, the air, the angels or man. We were lights who glorified Him, listened to Him and ".obeyed Him

O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be your ransom! What is there for" "?the person who recognizes these men as they should be recognized

O Salman, whoever recognizes them as they should be recognized, and follows their" example, befriends them and is free of their enemies, by Allah! he is one of us. He will "!return to where we return, and he will be where we are

O Messenger of Allah, is there belief without knowing their names"

"?and lineage

".No, Salman"

"?Messenger of Allah, where will I find them"

You already know al-Husayn; then there will be the master of the worshippers, 'Ali" ibn Husayn (Zayn al-'Abidin); then his son Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the piercer of the knowledge of the early and the later prophets and messengers (al-Baqir); then Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the truthful tongue of Allah (al-Sadiq); then Musa ibn Ja'far, the one who kept his rage silent through patience in Allah (al-Kadhim); then 'Ali ibn Musa, pleased with the secret of Allah (al-Rida '); then Muhammad ibn 'Ali, the chosen one from the creatures of Allah (al-Mukatar); then 'Ali ibn Muhammad, the guide to Allah (al-Hadi); then al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, the silent, trustworthy guardian over the secret of Allah (al-'Askari); then mim ha' mim dal (Muhammad), called Ibn al-Hasan, the ".announcer who establishes the right of Allah

,Salman said, 'I wept. Then I continued

”" !O Messenger of Allah, let my life be deferred until their time"

:He said, "O Salman, recite this'

فَإِذَا جَاء وَعْدُ أُولاهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَا أُوْلِي بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ فَجَاسُواْ خِلاَلَ الدِّيَارِ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُولاً

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنَاكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيرًا

When the promise for the first of the two came, We sent over you our servants of mighty prowess, so they went to and fro among the houses, and it was a promise to be accomplished. Then We gave you back the turn to prevail against them, and aided you with wealth and children and made you a numerous band." ' (۱۷:۵-۶)

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wept a lot," said Salman, "and my yearning became intense." I said, "O Messenger of "?Allah, is it a pledge from you

Yes, by the One Who sent me and entrusted me with the Message; it is a pledge" ' from me and from 'Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and the nine Imams descended from the children of al-Husayn, to you and those who are with us, and those of us who are wronged. Whoever is truly sincere in his belief, then by Allah, Salman, let Iblis and his armies come. Whoever has pure disbelief will be punished by retaliation, torture and inheritance (i.e. by others rather than them). Your Lord will not wrong anyone. It is :we who are indicated in this verse

وَنُرِيدُ أَن نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِى الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ. وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِى الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the leaders, and to make them the heirs, and to grant them power in the land, and to make Pharaoh, Haman and their armies see from them what they (feared." ' (۲۸:۵-۶

Salman said, "I took leave of the Messenger of Allah, completely unconcerned as to ".how Salman would meet death, or how death would meet him

Recognition of the Companions

Do not forsake certainty for doubt, and what is clear for what is hidden. Do not pass

judgement on what you cannot see because of something you are told

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about it. Allah despises slander and bad opinion of your believing brothers. What then does He think of boldness in attributing a false statement, false belief or lie to the ?Companions of the Messenger of Allah

,As He said

إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُم مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِندَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ

When you welcomed it with your tongues, and spoke with your mouths that which you had no knowledge of, and you deemed it an easy matter while with Allah it was (grievous. (٢٤:١٥

As long as you can find a way to speak well and act well of people whether or not they ,are present. Do not do anything else. Allah said

وَقُولُواْ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْناً

(Speak to men good words. (٢:٨٣

Know that Allah chose companions for His Prophet, honoured them with the noblest mark of honour and robed them in the robe of support, victory and the correct keeping of his company in desirable and undesirable situations. He made the tongue of His Prophet speak about their virtues, excellent qualities and marks of honour; so believe in their love, mention their excellence, and beware of the company of people of innovation, for it will make disbelief and clear loss grow in the heart. If the

excellence of some of them is not clear to you, then leave them to the Knower of the Unseen, and say, 'O Allah, I love anyone You and Your Messenger love, and I hate .anyone You and Your Messenger hate.' There is no obligation beyond that

The Honour and Sanctity of the Believers

No one respects the honour of the believers except the person who respects the honour and sacred claim of Allah over the believers. The person who best fulfils this sacred claim with respect to Allah and His Messenger is he who is the most particular in his respect for the believers' claim to honour. Whoever thinks little of the believers' .honour has rent apart the raiment of his belief

The Holy Prophet said, 'Part of esteem for Allah is to respect those who are near to Allah in belief.' And again, 'Whoever is not merciful to a young person nor respectful to an old person is not one of us. Do not call a Muslim an unbeliever when repentance '.can make up for it, unless he is someone that Allah has mentioned in His Book

,Allah said

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِى الدَّرْكِ الأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا

(The hypocrites are in the lowest level of the Fire. (۴:۱۴۵

.Occupy yourself with your business about which you will be questioned

Dutifulness to Parents

Dutifulness to one's parents comes from the bondsman's correct knowledge of Allah, since there is no act of worship which will bring the person performing it more quickly .to the pleasure of Allah than being dutiful to believing parents for the sake of Allah

This is because the right of the parents is derived from the right of Allah, as long as they are both on the path of the faith and the sunnah, and do not prevent a child from obeying Allah

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for the sake of obedience to them, or move him from certainty to doubt, or from abstinence to the desires of this world, or call him to anything which is in opposition to faith and the sunnah. If the situation is like that, then it is an act of obedience to rebel .against them, and an act of rebellion to obey them

,Allah said

وَإِن جَاهَـدَاکَ عَلی أَن تُشْـرِکَ بِی مَا لَیْسَ لَکَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِی الـدُّنْیَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِیلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَیَّ ثُمَّ إِلَیَّ مَرْجِعُکُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُکُم بِمَا کُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

If they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them. Keep company with them kindly in this world, but (follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return! (۳۱:۱۵

As far as companionship is concerned, keep their company and be gentle with them. Endure their hardship just as they endured yours when you were young, and do not withhold from them that which Allah has made plentiful for you in the way of food and clothes. Do not turn your face away from them nor raise your voice above theirs. To respect them is part of Allah's command; speak to them in the best possible way and .be kind to them. Allah will not let the reward of those who do good go to waste

Humility

Humility embraces every precious and noble rank and high position. If humility had a ,language which people understood

it would speak about the realities which are hidden in the outcomes of affairs. Humility is whatever is undertaken for Allah and in Allah, and anything other then that is trickery. Whoever is humble to Allah, Allah will honour over many of His bondsmen. The people of humility have recognizable signs. When one of them was asked about humility, he said, 'It means you are humble to the truth and follow it, even if you hear it from a child.' Many types of pride keep one from using, accepting and following knowledge. There are certain verses about this, denouncing the haughty. The people of humility have signs recognized by the angels in heaven and the gnostics on earth. ,Allah said

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلاًّ بِسِيمَاهُمْ

(On the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks. (۷:۴۶

,and elsewhere

مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِى اللّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ...

Whoever from among you turns back from his faith, then Allah will bring a people whom He loves and they shall love Him, humble towards the believers, mighty against (the unbelievers. (۵:۵۴

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكَمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you with the greatest (precaution. (۴۹:۱۳

And

فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنفُسَكُم...ْ

(Do not attribute purity to your souls. (۵۳:۳۲

The root of humility comes from the majesty, awe, and immensity of Allah. Allah is not pleased with any act of worship, nor does He accept it unless it comes

with humility. No one knows what is the true meaning of humility except those of His bondsmen who are close and connected with His unity. Allah said,

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

The servants of the Merciful are they who walk on earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say; Peace. (٢٥:٦٣)

He commanded the mightiest of His creation and the master of its people, Muhammad, to be humble, saying,

وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Make yourself gentle to the believers. (١٥:٨٨)

From humility grow submission, humility, fear and modesty; it is only from within humility that these qualities appear. True and perfect nobility is only given to those who are humble in the essence of Allah.

Ignorance

Ignorance is a form whose composition is of this world. When it advances, there is darkness; when it retreats, there is light. The bondsman vacillates with it as shadows vacillate with the sun. Have you not looked at man? Sometimes you find that he is ignorant of his own qualities and praises them, while he recognizes their faults in

others and criticizes them. At other times you find that a person knows his own nature and criticizes it, while praising the same in others. He vacillates between protection and disappointment. If he encounters integrity and protection, he is correct. If he .encounters lack of assistance and desertion, he errs

The key to ignorance is being satisfied with the knowledge one possesses, and placing all one's trust in it. The key

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to knowledge is the desire to exchange one level of knowledge for a higher level, together with divine grace and guidance. The lowest quality of an ignorant man is that he lays claim to knowledge which he does not deserve; his most common characteristic is ignorance of his own ignorance, and the most extreme aspect of his ignorance is to reject knowledge. There is nothing whose affirmation is the reality of .its negation other that worldly ignorance and greed. All ignorant people are alike

Eating

A little food is praiseworthy in every case and with all people, because it is salutory for the outer and the inner being. Eating is praiseworthy when done out of necessity, as a means and provision, at a time of plenty, or for nourishment. Eating out of necessity is for the pure; eating as a means and provision is a support for the precautious; eating .at a time of plenty is for those who trust; and eating for nourishment is for believers

There is nothing more harmful to the believer's heart than having too much food, for it brings about two things; hardness of heart and arousal of desires. Hunger is a condiment for believers, nourishment for the spirit, food for the heart, and health for '.the body. The Holy Prophet said, 'The son of Adam fills no worse vessel than his belly

David said, 'Leaving a morsel of food that I need is preferable to me than staying up '.for twenty nights

,The Messenger of Allah said

The believer eats to fill one stomach, and the hypocrite seven.' And elsewhere, 'Woe' to people who are swollen in two places!' When he was asked what they were, he '.replied, 'The stomach and the genitals

Isa (‘a) said, 'The heart does not have any worse disease than hardness, and no soul‘ has been more weakened than by lack of hunger. They are two halters of banishment '.and disappointment

Evil Whispering

Satan can get control over Allah's servants only by whispering to them when they have abandoned their remembrance of Allah, become disdainful, feel complacent .when faced with His prohibition, and forget that Allah sees their secret

Whispering is what comes from outside the heart by tacit permission of the intellect, and is sustained by man's own nature; once it becomes established in the heart, there is error, misguidance, and disbelief. Allah called on His bondsmen with His subtle call :and told them about the enmity of Iblis

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

(Shaytan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. (۳۵:۶

Be with him like a man who, standing near the shepherd's dog, has recourse to the dog's master in order to keep the dog away from him. It is the same when Satan

comes to whisper to you, to lead you off the true path and make you forget to remember Allah. Then seek refuge from him with your Lord and his Lord. He will defend the truth against falsehood, and help wronged ones, since He says,

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ

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سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

(Surely he has no authority over those who believe and who rely on their Lord. (16:99

Man will only be able to do this if he knows how he comes, and can recognize his methods of whispering, by constant watchfulness, sincerity in the arena of service, .awe of the All-Aware, and increased remembrance of Him

However, anyone who neglects to spend his time in awareness must undoubtedly be the prey of Satan. He should draw a lesson from what Satan does with such a person's self: he leads it to misguidance, deception and haughtiness by duping the .person into admiring his own actions, his worship, and his insight

Satan's insolent behaviour towards him causes a curse to descend on his knowledge, his gnosis and faculty of reasoning for all eternity; yet he has no power over those who are not negligent. Therefore hold to the firmest rope of Allah, which means seeking refuge with Allah, and having a sound need of Allah at every breath. Do not be deceived when Satan makes your acts of obedience appear beautiful in your eye: if he opens ninety-nine doors of goodness for you, it is only so that he may overcome you by opening the hundredth. So meet him with opposition, block his path and reject his .charm

Pride

The concept of pride embraces all those aspects of vanity found in those who are proud of their actions, little knowing what their end will be. Whoever is proud of himself

and his actions has strayed off the path of right guidance and has claimed what is not .his

Anyone who claims something to which he has no right is a liar, even if he conceals his claim for a long time. The first thing which happens to the proud man is that he is stripped of his object of pride, so that he will know that he is contemptible and incapable, and will testify against himself; and that will be a firmer proof against him. .This was the case with Iblis

Pride is a plant whose seed is disbelief, whose earth is hypocrisy, and whose water is transgression. Its branches are ignorance, its leaves are misguidance, and its fruit is being cursed to remain in the Fire forever. Whoever chooses pride has sowed disbelief and cultivated hypocrisy. It is inevitable that it must bear its fruit and he will .end up in the Fire

Generosity

Generosity is part of the nature of the prophets, and the buttress of belief. A person cannot be a believer unless he is also generous; he must also have certainty and high aspiration (himmah), because generosity is a ray of the light of certainty. Effort is easy for him who knows his objective. The Holy Prophet said, 'The friend of Allah is but '.naturally disposed to generosity

Generosity is bestowed upon everyone beloved of Allah who has little of this world. ,One of the signs of generosity is a lack of concern with the wealth of this world

and with whoever owns it, believing or unbelieving, obedient or rebellious, noble or low. The generous man feeds others while he himself is hungry; he clothes others while he is naked; he gives to others while he refuses to accept the gifts of others. He is favoured by that, and does not indebt others by his graciousness. If he were to possess the entire world, he would see himself merely as an alien in it. If he spent it all .for Allah in a single hour, it would not be irksome for him

The Messenger of Allah said, 'The generous person is near to Allah, near to people, near to the Garden and far from the Fire. The miser, however, is far from Allah, far from people, far from the Garden and near to the Fire.' The only person who can be called generous is the one who expends himself to obey Allah and for the sake of .Allah, even if it is only by a loaf of bread or a drink of water

The Holy Prophet also said, 'The person who is generous is generous with what he owns, and through it desires the face of Allah. As for that person who pretends to be generous and rebels against Allah, he is the recipient of Allah's wrath and anger. He is the most miserly of people towards himself, so how must he be with other people, ,when he follows his own passion and opposes the command of Allah?' As Allah said

وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ

أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالًا مَّعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ

Most certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and other burdens along with their (own burdens. (۲۹:۱۳

The Holy Prophet said, 'The son of Adam cries out, "My property! My property! My wealth! My wealth!" O Wretch! Where were you when there was the Kingdom, and you were not? Is there anything more than what you eat and consume, or what you wear and wear out, or what you give in charity and what you make last?' Either you are shown mercy by it or you are punished for it; therefore use your intelligence, and .understand that you should not love the property of others more than your own

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'What you have already given was destined for those who now own it; what you have held back is for those who will inherit it, and what you have now you have no power over, except to become arrogant by it. How much you strive to seek this world and to make claims! Do you wish to impoverish '?yourself and enrich others

Self–Reckoning

If there were nothing to make a person turn to self-reckoning (hisab) other than shame at being presented before Allah and the disgrace of having the veil torn away from his secrets, man would throw himself from the mountaintops and not seek refuge in a building, nor eat, nor drink, nor sleep, except when necessary for preserving his life. This is how a person behaves when he sees the Resurrection, with

all its terrors and hardships, with every breath he takes. In his heart he looks at the time when he will stand before the Compelling One, and when he takes account of himself it is as if he were being summoned to that presentation before Allah, and is being questioned in his death-throes. Allah said,

وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ

Even though there be the weight of a mustard seed, yet will We bring it and sufficient are We to take account. (۲۱:۴۷)

One of the Imams said, 'Take reckoning from yourselves before you are called to reckoning. Weigh your actions with the scale of your own fear of shame, before they are weighed for you.'

Abu Dharr said, 'The mention of the Garden is death, and so is the mention of the Fire. What a wonder that a person's self lives between two deaths!'

It is related that Yahya ('a) used to reflect for the entire night on the Garden and the Fire, so that his night was spent in wakefulness and he did not sleep. Then in the morning he would say, 'O Allah; whither can one flee? Where can one stay? O Allah, one can only flee to You.'

Opening the Prayer

When you face the qiblah, you should despair of this world, what it contains of

creation and what others are occupied with. Empty your heart of every preoccupation which might distract you from Allah. See the immensity of Allah with your innermost being, and remember that

,you will stand before Him. For Allah has said

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّواْ إِلَى اللّهِ مَوْلاَهُمُ الْحَقِّ

There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before, and they shall be (brought back to Allah, their true Patron. (۱۰:۳۰

Stand at the foot of fear and hope. When you recite the takbir, you should belittle what is between the high heavens and the moist earth, which are all below His glory, for when Allah looks into the heart of His bondsman while he is saying the takbir, and sees in his heart something obstructing the truth of his declaring that Allah is great, ?He says, 'O liar! Do you try to deceive Me

By My might and My majesty, I will deny you the sweetness of My remembrance, and '.I will veil you from My nearness and from joy in My intimate communion

Know that Allah does not need your service. He is independent of you, your worship and your supplication. He summons you by His favour to show you mercy, to put you far from His punishment, to spread some of the blessings of His kindness over you, to guide you to the path of His pleasure, and to open to you the door of His forgiveness. If Allah had created what He created in the universe many times over, forever without end, it would still be the same to Allah whether they all rejected Him or united with Him. All that He has from the worship of creatures is

the display of His generosity and power. Therefore make modesty your cloak and incapacity your shawl. Enter under the throne of the power of Allah, and you will .capture the benefits of His lordship, seeking help in Him and asking for His succour

Bowing in Prayer

The bondsman of Allah does not truly bow (in ruku') but that Allah adorns him with the light of His radiance, shades him in the shade of His greatness and clothes him in the garment of His purity. Bowing is first and prostration (sujud) is second: there is courtesy in bowing, and in prostration nearness to Allah. Whoever is not good in the courtesy is not fit for nearness; therefore bow with the ruku' of one who is humble to Allah, abased in his heart and fearful under His power, submitting his limbs to Allah like one who is fearful and sorrowful for what he might miss of the benefits of those .who bow

It is related that Rabi' ibn Khuthaym used to stay awake all night until dawn, in a single ruku'. In the morning he would sigh and say, 'Oh! The sincere have gone ahead, and we are cut off!' Make your ruku' properly by keeping your back straight, coming down from your aspirations in standing to serve Him which comes only with His help. Let your heart flee from the whisperings, tricks and deceit of Satan. Allah will elevate His bondsmen according to their humility to Him, and will guide them to the roots

of humility, submission and abasement according to how well their innermost being is acquainted with His immensity.

Prostration in Prayer

A person who performs true prostration (sujud) does not lose Allah at all, even if it is done only once in his entire life; but the man who deserts his Lord in that state does not prosper. He is like someone who deceives himself, neglecting and forgetting the immediate joy and the ease after this life which Allah has prepared for those who prostrate themselves.

The person who does well in his prostration is never far from Allah; while the person who shows ill courtesy and neglects to honour Him because his heart is attached to something other than Allah in the state of prostration will never come near to Him. Therefore prostrate yourself with the prostration of some- one abased, who knows that he is created from the earth on which people tread, that he is fashioned from sperm which everyone finds impure, and that he was given being when he did not exist.

Allah made prostration the occasion to draw near to Him in one's heart, innermost being and spirit. Whoever draws near to Him is far from all that is other than Him. Do you not see that in its outward appearance the state of prostrations is not complete except by disappearing from all things and being veiled from all that the eyes see? Thus does Allah want the inward being to be. If someone's heart is attached to something other

than Allah in prayer, he is near to that thing, and far from the reality of what Allah ,desires in His prayer. For He has said

مَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّن قَلْبَيْنِ فِى جَوْفِهِ

(Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his breast. (۳۳:۴

In the words of the Messenger of Allah: “Almighty Allah said, ‘When I look on the heart of a bondsman, I know if he has sincere love and obedience for My sake and seeks My pleasure in it. Then I take charge of him and draw near to him. Whoever is occupied with other than Me in his prayer is one of those who mocks himself, and his name is ”’.recorded in the register of the losers

The Tashahhud

The tashahhud is praise of Allah. Be a slave to Him in your innermost being, fearful and humble to Him in action as you are His bondsman by word and claim. Join the .truthfulness of your tongue to the pure truthfulness of your innermost being

He created you a slave and commanded you to worship Him with your heart, your tongue and your limbs. Realise your enslavement to Him by His lordship over you. Know that the forelocks of creation are all in His hand. Creatures possess neither breath nor sight except by His power and will: they are incapable of bringing forth the ,least thing in His kingdom, unless it is by His permission and will. Allah said

وَرَبُّکَ یَخْلُقُ مَا یَشَاء وَیَخْتَارُ مَا کَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِیَرَهُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

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وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

Your Lord creates and chooses whom he pleases; to choose is not theirs. Glory be to (Allah, and exalted be He above what they associate [with Him]. (۲۸:۶۸

Therefore be a slave to Allah, remembering Him by speech and proclamations, and join the truthfulness of your tongue to the purity of your innermost being, for He created you. He is too mighty and majestic for anyone to have will or volition except by His earlier will and volition. Fulfill the state of enslavement by being content with .His wisdom, and by worshipping in order to carry out His commands

He commanded you to send blessings upon His beloved Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace. Therefore join your prayer to Muhammad with your prayer to Allah, obedience to Muhammad to obedience to Allah, and your witnessing of Muhammad to your witnessing of Allah. Watch out that you do not miss the blessings of knowledge which are contained in one's respect for his sanctity, with the result that you are denied the benefits of the prayer on him. Allah commanded him to ask for forgiveness for you, and to intercede for you when you perform what is obligatory in the command and prohibition, and in the sunnah and courtesies (adab) demonstrated to man through the Holy Prophet. You should know the majesty of his .rank with Allah

Salam

The meaning of the taslim (greeting of peace) at the end of the prayer means ,security, that is

anyone who carries out the command of Allah and the sunnah of His Prophet out of humility to Him and showing fear, has security from the tribulations of this world and freedom from the punishment of the next world. Al-Salam (peace) is one of the names of Allah, which He entrusted to His creation so that they would make use of it in their behaviour, trusts and contracts; in confirming their companies and assemblies; and .for the soundness of their social relations

If you want to establish this salam in its proper place, and to fulfill its meaning, then fear Allah; and make your faith, your heart, and your intellect sound. Do not sully them by the injustice of acts of rebellion. Let your guardians be safe from you; do not weary, or bore or alienate them through your bad behaviour towards them, nor with your friend, nor with your enemy. If those who are close to someone are not safe from him, then those furthest from him are safest. Anyone who does not establish salam on the occasions when it should be established has no peace and no submission: he is a liar in his salam, even if he uses it as a form of greeting among .people

Know that man's existence lies between trials and afflictions in this world. Allah may test him with blessings, to see his thankfulness, or with hardship, to see if he will show ,steadfastness and nobility by obeying Him, or disgrace in rebelling against Him

although there is no way to reach His good pleasure and mercy except through His grace. The only means to obey Him is when he grants success: none can intercede with Him except with His permission and mercy.

Repentance

Repentance is the rope of Allah, and the mainstay of His concern for His servants, who must always show repentance, in every state. Each group of bondsmen has its own form of repentance:

The repentance of the prophets is for the disquiet caused to their innermost being by any outward source of vexation, while the repentance of the awliya' (friends of Allah) arises from the subtle change of hue in their thoughts. The repentance of the pure lies in their calm abandonment of whatever oppresses them; the repentance of the elite is for being occupied with anything other than Allah, and the repentance of the common people is for wrong actions. Each of them recognizes and is aware of the cause of his repentance, and his intention therein, but it would take too long to explain all of these here.

As for the repentance of the common man, he washes his inward being with the water of regret, in constant recognition of his wrong action, having regret for what he has done, and fear for what remains of his life. He does not think that his wrong actions are insignificant, for that would lead him to laziness; his continued weeping and regret for what he has missed is in itself an act of

worship. He should restrain himself from his worldly appetites, and seek Allah's help in .showing repentance, and to protect him from returning to what he did before

He trains himself in the arena of ignorance and worship. He makes up for obligations missed: he answers others' calls for help, withdraws from bad company, spends his night awake, thirsts during the day, constantly reflecting on his end and seeking help from Allah, asking Him to make him steady in his states of ease and difficulty, and constant in his trials and afflictions so that he will not fall from the ranks of the repentant. This will purify him of his wrong actions, increase his knowledge, and ,elevate his rank. As Allah has said

فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

Thus Allah will certainly know those who are truthful, and Allah will certainly know the (liars. (۲۹:۳

Retreat

Anyone who embarks on a retreat ('uzlah) from the world is fortified by Allah and protected by His guardianship. What joy there is for the person who has withdrawn with Him, secretly and openly! To do this, he must differentiate between truth and falsehood, love, poverty, chose hardship and abstinence, and seize every opportunity for retreat. He must contemplate the outcome of his actions, seeing his incapacity for worship while worshipping as much as possible, abandoning pride, and constantly engaging in remembrance without showing heedlessness, which is the hunting ground of Satan and the beginning of every affliction and the reason for all that is .obscure

.He should also rid his house of everything he has no immediate need for

Isa (‘a) said, 'Guard your tongue in order to develop your heart, and make your abode‘ be enough for you. Beware of showing off and of having excess provision. Be modest before your Lord and weep for your errors. Flee from people as you flee from the lion and the viper. They were a medicine and now they have become a disease. Then meet Allah wherever you will.' And Rabi' ibn Khuthaym said, 'If you can manage today to be in a place where you do not know anyone and where none knows you, then do '.so

Retreat brings protection for the limbs, a free heart, a sound livelihood, the destruction of Satan's weapons, the avoidance of every evil and rest for the heart. There is no prophet nor regent (wasi) who has not chosen retreat in his lifetime, either .at his beginning or at his end

Silence

Silence is the mark of those who are certain of the realities which have already come to be, and about which the Pen has already written. It is the key to every rest in this world and the next: it brings Allah's pleasure, a lightening of the reckoning and a protection from errors and mistakes. Allah has made it a veil for the ignorant and an .adornment for the man of knowledge

Through silence, passions can be set aside, and with it come self-discipline, the ,sweetness of worship, removal of hardheartedness

abstinence, virtuousness and resourcefulness. Therefore lock your tongue to speech which is not absolutely necessary, especially when you do not find anyone worth talking to; except, that is, when you are talking specifically about matters to do with .Allah

Rabi' ibn Khuthaym used to place a parchment before him, upon which he would write down everything he said during the day. In the evening he would call himself to account while he was still alive, seeing what he had said both for and against himself. '!Then he would say, 'Oh! The silent have indeed been saved

One of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah used to put pebbles in his mouth. When he wanted to say something he knew was both to Allah, in Allah and for the sake of Allah, he would remove them from his mouth. Many of the Companions used .to breathe like someone drowning, and speak like someone who was ill

People's destruction or salvation lies in speech and silence. Good fortune belongs to those who are given knowledge of what is incorrect and correct in speech, and the science of silence and its advantages, for it is one of the qualities of the prophets and one of the distinguishing marks of the select. Whoever knows the value of speech is an expert in the company of silence: once a person has been exposed to the subtleties of silence, and has been entrusted with its treasures, then both his speech and silence are worship. No one is privy

.to this worship of his except the King of all, the All-compelling

Intellect and Passion

The man of intellect submits to what is true and is just in his speech; he shrinks from what is false but opposes it in his speech. He leaves this world behind, but does not .leave his faith

The proof of the man of intellect lies in two things: truthful words and correct actions. The man of intellect does not say something which the intellect rejects, neither does he expose himself to suspicion, nor abandon the help of those who have been tested. Knowledge guides him in his actions; gnosis is his certainty in the paths he treads, and forbearance is his companion at all times. Passion, however, is the enemy of the intellect, the opponent of truth and the companion of falsehood. The strength of passion comes from worldly appetites, and its initial manifestation is caused by doing what is forbidden, neglecting obligations, making light of the sunnah and engrossing .oneself in amusements

Envy

An envious man harms himself before he harms the person he envies, as was the case with Iblis: by his envy he brought the curse upon himself, whereas to Adam he brought about his election, guidance, elevation to the true contract, and his being chosen. Therefore be envied rather than envious, because the punishment of the .envious is always worse than that of the envied; thus is provision apportioned

So how does envying benefit the envious, and how does envy harm the envied? The

root of envy lies in the blindness of the heart, and rejection of Allah's overflowing favour: they are two wings of disbelief. Through envy the son of Adam falls into endless grief and is utterly destroyed, and there is no way he can save himself. The envious does not really repent, for he continues to dwell upon and believe in his envy; indeed it is such an inherent part of his nature that it manifests itself unopposed and without apparent reason, causing him harm. A person's basic nature does not change, .even with treatment

Greed

It is said that Ka'b al-Ahbar was questioned about what is soundest and what is most corrupt in faith. 'The soundest thing is scrupulousness and the most corrupt is greed,' .he replied

Avarice is the wine of Satan, which he gives to his chosen ones with his own hand. Whoever becomes drunk upon it sobers up only in the pain of Allah's punishment in the proximity of the one who gave him the drink. If there were no other reason for Allah's wrath with respect to greed except man's preferring this world to faith, that ,would still be a sufficiently severe chastisement. Allah said

أُوْلَـئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوُاْ الضَّلاَلَةَ بِالْهُدَى فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُواْ مُهْتَدِينَ

These are they who buy error for the price of right guidance, and chastisement for (forgiveness. (۲:۱۶

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Be gracious to whoever you wish and you are

his prince. Seek help from whoever you like and you are his

equal. Be in need of whoever you like and you are his prisoner.' He who is greedy is stripped of his belief without feeling it, for belief prevents the bondsman from being greedy in creation. He also says, 'My friend, the vaults of Allah are full of marks of '.honour, and He does not neglect to reward of someone who acts well

Whatever a person might possess is tarnished by defects. Belief makes him rely on trust, moderation, forsaking desire, clinging to the obedience of Allah, and despairing of people. If he does that, then he is keeping close to his belief and he has acted correctly. If he does not, belief parts company with him and leaves him to his bad .nature

Corruption

The corruption of the outward being comes from the corruption of the inward. If you put your innermost being in order, Allah will put your outward being in order; if you fear Allah inwardly, He will not rend the veil publicly. But he who betrays Allah .inwardly, Allah will expose in the open

The greatest corruption is born of prolonged expectation, greed, and pride, as Allah ,told us in the story of Qarun when He said

وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِى الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

Do not seek to make mischief in the land; surely Allah does not love the corruptors. ((٢٨:٧٧

,Elsewhere He said

تِلْکَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَهُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِینَ لَا یُرِیدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِی الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَهُ لِلْمُتَّقِینَ

As for] that Future Abode, We assign it to those who have no]

desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor to make mischief; and the good end is for (those who have precaution. (۲۸:۸۳

These defects come from what Qarun did and believed. The root of corruption lies in loving this world, amassing its wealth, following the self, elevating its appetites, loving praise, agreeing with Satan, and following his footsteps: all of these faults combine .with a love of paying Allah no heed and forgetting His favours

Therefore you should flee from people, reject this world, interrupt your rest, break with your normal habits, cut off the source of worldly appetites at the root by constantly remembering Allah and clinging to obedience to Him, and enduring people's aversion, the over-dependence of a comrade, and hostile malice on the part of your family and relatives. If you do that, then the door of Allah's kindness will be opened to you, since He has good regard for you, as well as forgiveness and mercy. You will have left the company of the heedless and freed your heart from the captivity of Satan. You will come to the door of Allah in the company of those who come to Him, and you will travel a path on which you may hope to be permitted to come to the .Noble, the Magnanimous, the Generous, the Merciful

Well-being

Seek well being (salamah) from Allah wherever you are in every state you may be in, for your faith, your heart, and the ultimate outcome of your affairs. He who seeks

it does not always find it. How then, is it that there are some who expose themselves to affliction, travel the opposite path to well-being and oppose its principles, seeing ?safety as destruction and destruction as safety

Well-being has been taken away from people in every age, especially this one; yet it can be rediscovered through enduring antipathy and even injury from other people, through patience in the face of disaster, making light of death, fleeing from whatever is reprehensible and being content with a minimum of material possessions. If you are not like that, then you must go into retreat. If you cannot do that then be silent, although silence is not the same as retreat. If you cannot be silent, then speak what will help you and not harm you; but that is not the same thing as silence. If you cannot find any way to do that, then move about by journeying from land to land, casting your self (nafs) into the uncharted territories with a pure intention, humble heart, and ,steadfast body. Allah said

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلآئِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُواْ فِيمَ كُنتُمْ قَالُواْ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الأَرْضِ قَالْوَاْ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُواْ فِيهَا فَأُوْلَـئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءتْ مَصِيرًا

Surely, [as for] those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say, "In what state were you?" They shall say, "We were oppressed in the land." They shall say, "Was not Allah's earth spacious so that you could have migrated

(therein?" (۴:۹۷

Take whatever belongs to the rightly acting bondsmen of Allah. Do not struggle with obscure matters, nor contend with contradictions. If anyone tells you, 'I', say 'you'. Do not claim knowledge in anything, even if you are an expert in it. Uncover your secret only to one who is nobler in the faith than you, and thus you will find nobility. If you do this you will obtain well being, and you will remain with Almighty without any .connection to anything else

Worship

Persevere in performing the customs and obligations in worship ('ibadah), for they are the source: whoever obtains them and performs them properly has obtained everything. The best form of worship is that which comes nearest to security. This is the one most free of harm and the most consistent, be it ever so small. If you have performed your obligatory and supererogatory prayers, then you are a true .worshipper

Beware of treading on the carpet of a king unless you do so with abasement, acknowledgement of need, fear, and respect. Make your movements free of showing .off and your secret free of hardness

The Holy Prophet said, 'The person who prays is conversing with his Lord.' So be embarrassed before the One Who is Cognizant of your secret, Who knows your conversation and what your conscience conceals. Be where He will see you doing what He wants you to do, and performing that to which He has summoned you. Those who have gone before us occupied themselves from

the moment they completed one obligatory prayer to the moment they started another, so that they could perform both prayers sincerely and correctly. It seems that in our times it has become a virtue to leave the obligatory aside, which is like .having a body without a soul

Ali ibn al-Husayn said, 'I wonder at a person who seeks something extra while he' abandons an obligation; he only does so because he lacks recognition of the matter and respect for it. He does not see Allah's will in preparing people to obey His '.command and choosing that for them

Reflection

Reflect on what has passed of this world. Has any of it remained for anyone? Has anyone remained in it, be he noble or lowly, rich or poor, friend or enemy? Similarly, what has not yet happened of it resembles more closely that which has passed of it, than water resembles water. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Death is enough of a warner; the intellect is enough of a guide; precaution is enough of a provision; worship is enough of an occupation; Allah is sufficient as an intimate friend; the '.Qur'an is enough of a clarification

And elsewhere, 'Only affliction and trial remain of this world. If a person is saved, it is only by sincerely seeking refuge.' And Noah said, 'I found this world to be like a house with two doors. I entered through one of them and went out through the other.' Such is the state of the one

who was saved by Allah: so what is the state of one who feels at ease in this world, ?relies on it, wastes his life by cultivating it, and is full of worldly demands

Reflection is the mirror of good deeds and the expiation of bad deeds. It is the light of the heart, and guarantees ease to other people and success in obtaining betterment for the next abode; it allows one to foresee the outcome of one's actions, and causes an increase in knowledge. Worship of Allah is unparalleled when accompanied by this quality. The Messenger of Allah said, 'To reflect for an hour is better than worshipping '.for a year

The station of reflection is only obtained by him whom Allah has singled out for the .light of gnosis (ma'rifah) and tawhid

Rest

The believer only acquires true rest when he meets Allah, although rest may also be obtained by these four things: silence, by which you recognize the state of your heart and your self in your relations with your Creator; retreat, by which you are rescued from the evils of the age, outwardly and inwardly; hunger, which kills fleshly appetites and temptation; and wakefulness, which illuminates your heart, purifies your nature .and cleanses your spirit

The Holy Prophet said, 'If a man finds himself in the morning tranquil in his heart, healthy in body and with food for the day, it is as if all of this world had been chosen for him'; and Wahb ibn Munabbih said: "In

the first and the last Books it is written ‘O contentment, honour and riches are to be found with you. Whoever wins, wins through you!'

Abu al-Darda' said, 'What Allah has allotted to me will not pass me by, even if it were on the wing of a breeze'; and Abu Dharr said, 'The secret of a man who does not trust his Lord is always exposed, even if it is imprisoned in solid rock.' No one is in a greater state of loss, is viler, or lower than the person who does not believe what his Lord has guaranteed for him and allotted him before He created him. In spite of that, this person relies on his own strength, management, effort, and striving, and goes beyond the limits of his Lord by his seeking ways and means which Allah has caused him to have no need of.

Avarice

Do not covet anything avariciously; for if you ignore it, it will come to you anyway, if it is destined to be yours. Then you would find ease in your heart with Allah, praise for leaving it; but you will be blamed for your haste in seeking it, for not trusting Him, and for not being content with the decree. Allah created this world the same as a shadow: when you chase it, it tires you out and you can never catch up with it. If you leave it alone, it follows you inexorably, and gives you no cause for fatigue.

The Holy

Prophet said, 'A covetous man is bereft; yet in spite of his deprivation, he is blamed wherever he is.' For how could he be other than bereft when he flees from the covenant of Allah, and opposes His words:

اللَّهُ الَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

Allah is He Who created you, then gave you sustenance, then He causes you to die, then brings you life. (۳۰:۴۰)

The covetous person is in the midst of seven difficult evils: thinking, which harms his body but brings it no help; anxiety, which has no end; weariness, from which he will find rest only in death, although he has the greatest weariness when at rest; fear, which only makes him fall into what he fears; sorrow, which makes his livelihood disturbed without any benefit to him; reckoning, which will not save him from the punishment of Allah unless He pardons him, and punishment, from which there is neither flight nor escape.

The one who trusts in Allah spends morning and evening in His protection and well-being. Allah has hastened for him what suffices him, and prepared for him things which only Allah knows. Avarice is what flows out from Allah's anger. When the slave is not bereft of certainty, he is not covetous. Certainty is the earth of Islam and the heaven of iman.

Clarification

The intimate conversation of the gnostics possesses three roots: fear, hope and love. Fear is the branch of knowledge; hope is the branch of certainty, and love is the branch

of gnosis (ma'rifah) . The proof of fear is flight; the proof of hope is quest, and the .proof of love is preferring the Beloved over all others

When knowledge is confirmed in truthfulness, he fears. When fear is genuine, he flees. When he flees, he is saved. When he sees the light of certainty in the heart, he sees overflowing favour. When the vision of overflowing favour is firm, there is hope. When he feels the sweetness of belief in hope, he seeks. When he has success in the quest, he finds. When the light of gnosis is manifested in his heart, the breeze of love stirs, he settles in the shadow of the Beloved, prefers the Beloved over all others, follows His commands and avoids His prohibitions, and chooses them over everything else. When he perseveres towards intimacy with the Beloved while carrying out His commands and avoiding His prohibitions, he has reached the spirit of intimate .communion and nearness

These three roots are like the sanctuary, the mosque, and the Ka'bah: whoever enters the Sacred Precinct is safe from people. If a person enters the mosque, his senses are safe from being used in disobedience, and if a person enters the Ka'bah, his heart is safe from being occupied with anything other than the remembrance of .Allah

Take heed, O believer! If you are in a state in which you are content to meet death, then thank Allah for His grace and protection. If it is other than that, then

move from it with sound resolution, and have regret for that part of your life which passed in heedlessness. Seek Allah's help in purifying your outward nature of wrong actions and cleanse your inward being from faults. Cut the shackles of heedlessness .from your heart, and extinguish the fire of desires in your soul

Judgements

The heart may be described as belonging to one of four types: uplifted, open, low, or stopped. The raf (uplifting) of the heart lies in remembrance of Allah; the fath (opening) of the heart lies in the pleasure of Allah; the khafd (lowering) of the heart lies in occupation with anything other than Allah, and the waqf (stopping) of the heart ' . lies in paying heed to anything other than Allah

Do you not see that when a servant remembers Allah with sincere respect, every veil that was between him and Allah is removed? If the heart obeys the source of Allah's decree and is content with that, then how do happiness, joy and worldly rest open up to him? When the heart is occupied with some of the matters of this world and its means, how, then, can it find what Allah has mentioned? Then the heart becomes reduced and dark like an empty, ruined house which has neither prosperity nor .occupant

When a person is distracted from remembering Allah, then you see that he is 'stopped' from advancing, and veiled. He has become obdurate and dark since leaving the light which issues from

the servant's veneration of his Lord. The sign of raf' lies in agreement in every respect, lack of opposition, and constant yearning; the sign of fath lies in trustful dependence on Allah, truthfulness and certainty; the sign of khafd lies in pride, showing off, and greed; and the sign of waqf lies in the departure of the sweetness of obedience, lack of the bitterness of rebellion, and of confusion in the knowledge of .what is permitted and what is forbidden

Siwak

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Using the siwak' purifies the mouth and is pleasing to the Lord,' and he made it one of the confirmed practices. It has benefits for both the .outward and the inward being which even men of intelligence cannot count

As you remove the stains caused by food and drink from your teeth with the siwak, so remove the impurity of your wrong actions by humble entreaty, humility, night prayers, and asking for forgiveness before dawn. Purify your outer being from impurities, and your inner being from the turbidity of acts of opposition and committing anything prohibited, all the while acting sincerely for Allah. The Holy Prophet made its use an example for people for alertness and attention, in that the siwak is a clean, soft plant and the twig of a blessed tree. The teeth are what Allah created in the mouth as a tool for eating, an implement for chewing, a reason for enjoying food and for keeping the intestines in order. The teeth

are pure jewels, which become dirty because they are present when food is chewed, leading to a deterioration in the way the mouth smells, and decay in the gums. When the intelligent believer cleans with the soft plant and wipes it on these pure jewels, he removes the decay and adulteration from them and they then revert to their original .state

Similarly Allah created the heart pure and clean, and made its food remembrance, reflection, awe and respect. When the pure heart turns grey by being fed on heedlessness and vexation, it is polished by the burnish of repentance and cleaned by the water of regret, so that it reverts to its primal state and its basic essence. As Allah ,said

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who turn [in repentance] to Him, and He loves those who (purify themselves. (۲:۲۲۲

In recommending the use of the siwak the Holy Prophet was advocating that it be used on the teeth themselves; but he also implied the meaning and example we have referred to above, that for anyone who empties his faculty of reflection for the purpose of drawing inward lessons from the outward examples, with respect to both the principle and roots of faith, Allah will open the springs of wisdom, and will give him still more of His overflowing favour, for Allah does not neglect the reward of those .who act well

Using the Lavatory

The lavatory is called in Arabic 'the place of rest', because there people may find rest

from the burden of impurities and empty themselves of grossness and filth. There the believer may reflect on how he is cleansing himself from the food and perishable matter of this world, and how his own death will come in like manner: therefore he should find ease in avoiding the world, leaving it aside and freeing himself and his heart from its distractions. He should be averse to taking and gathering this world just as he loathes impurity, the lavatory and filth, reflecting on how something good in one state becomes so base in another. He knows that holding onto contentment and .precaution will bring him ease in the two abodes

Thus ease comes from considering this world to be insignificant, giving up one's enjoyment of it, and removing the impurity of what is forbidden or doubtful. A person closes the door of pride on himself once he recognizes this; he flees from wrong actions and opens the door of humility, regret, and modesty. He strives to carry out Allah's commands and to avoid His prohibitions, seeking a good end and excellent proximity to Allah. He locks himself in the prison of fear, steadfastness, and the restraint of his appetites until he reaches the safety of Allah in the world to come, and tastes the food of His good pleasure. If he intends that, everything else means .nothing to him

Purification

If you seek purification and ablution (wudu'), then go to water as you would go to the ,mercy of Allah

for He has made water the key to being near to Him in intimate conversation, and a guide to the domain of His service. Just as the mercy of Allah purifies the wrong actions of His bondsmen, so are outward impurities cleansed only by water. As Allah ,said

وَهُوَ الَّذِی أَرْسَلَ الرِّیَاحَ بُشْرًا بَیْنَ یَدَیْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاء مَاء طَهُورًا

It is He Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy; and We send down ,pure water out of heaven! (۲۵:۴۸) and elsewhere

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاء کُلَّ شَیْءٍ حَیٍّ أَفَلَا یُؤْمِنُونَ

(We have made of water everything living. Will they not then believe? (۲۱:۳۰

As He gives life to every blessing in this world from water, so by His mercy and overflowing favour He gives life to the heart and to acts of obedience, and to reflection in the purity of water, its fineness, its cleanness, its blessing and the subtleness of how it mixes with everything; through water He also gives life to the heart, when you purify those limbs which you have been commanded by Allah to .purify, and which you use to worship in your obligatory and customary prayers

From each limb come many benefits. When you treat the limbs with respect, then their benefits will soon spring up for you. Deal with Allah's creation like water which mixes with things and gives everything its due, while not changing itself in essence. This is expressed by the words of the Messenger of Allah, 'The sincere believer is like water.' Let

your purity with Allah in all your obedience be like the purity of water when He sent it down out of heaven and called it pure. Purify your heart with precaution and certainty .when you purify your limbs with water

Entering the Mosque

When you reach the door of the mosque, know that you have come to the door of a mighty King. Only the purified tread on His carpet, and only the true are allowed to sit with Him. So be alert in your approach of the court of the awesome King, for you are in great danger if you are heedless. Know that He can do whatever He wishes in justice and overflowing favour with you and by you. If He inclines to you with His mercy and overflowing favour, He has accepted a small amount of your obedience and has given .you a great reward for it

If He demands His due of truthfulness and sincerity by His justice towards you, He has veiled you and rejected your obedience, even if you have had obedience in abundance. He does what He wills. Acknowledge your incapacity, inadequacy, fragility, and poverty before Him, for you have turned yourself to worshipping Him and being close to Him. Turn to Him, and know that neither the secret nor the revealed part of any creature is hidden from Him. Be like the poorest of His servants before Him: strip your heart of every occupation which might veil you from your Lord, for He only

accepts the purest and most sincere. Look to see in which register your name will be .written

If you taste the sweetness of His intimate conversation and the pleasure of His addressing you, and drink the cup of His mercy, and those favours he has bestowed on you and those of your requests which He has accepted, then you have served Him properly, and may therefore enter the sphere of His permission and security. If not, then stand as one whose power and ability have been cut off, and whose term has come to an end. If Almighty Allah knows that in your heart you are sincerely seeking refuge with Him, He will regard you with compassion, mercy and kindness. He will cause you to succeed in that which He loves and which is pleasing to Him, for He is generous. He loves noble generosity and the worship of those who need Him, and ,who are burning up at His door seeking His good pleasure. Allah said

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him, and removes the evil? ((۲۷:۶۲

Supplication

Observe the courtesy of supplication. Consider the One on whom you call, how you call on Him and why you call; affirm the immensity and magnificence of Allah. Look with your heart at how He knows what is in your conscience, how He sees your secret being and whatever has occurred and will occur in it, both true and false. Learn the paths

to your salvation and destruction, so that you do not call upon Allah for something which perhaps contains your destruction, but which you suppose to contain your ,salvation. Allah said

وَيَدْعُ الإِنسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الإِنسَانُ عَجُولاً

(Man prays for evil as he ought to pray for good, and man is ever hasty. (١٧:١١

Reflect about what you ask for and why you are asking: supplication should be a total response to the Truth on your part, and a melting of the heart in contemplation of its Lord. It is to abandon all choices and to surrender all matters, both outward and inward, to Allah. If the preconditions of the supplication are not met, then do not look for fulfillment, for He knows what is secret and what is hidden; you might ask Him for .something when He knows that you conceal the opposite of it

One of the companions said to the others, 'You are waiting for rain, and I am waiting for stones.' Know that if Allah had not commanded us to call on Him, He would nevertheless have favoured us with an answer immediately after we finished the prayer. How, then, is His favour, given the fact that He has guaranteed that answer to ?whoever fulfils the conditions of the prayer

The Messenger of Allah was asked about the most powerful name of Allah: he said, '.'Every name of Allah is most powerful

Free your heart from all that is other-than-Him, and call on Him by whatever name you like. In reality

.Allah does not have one name rather than another: He is Allah, the One, the Almighty

The Holy Prophet said, 'Allah does not answer the supplication of a heedless heart.' When one of you wants His Lord to give to him whatever he asks of Him, he should renounce all people, putting his hope in Allah alone. When Allah sees that in his heart, .He will give him whatever he asks

When you have established the preconditions of supplication which I have mentioned, and have become sincere in your innermost being for His sake, then rejoice in the good news that one of three things will happen: either He will hasten to give you what you have asked for, or He will store up something better for you, or He will avert from you an affliction which would have destroyed you had He sent it. The Holy Prophet reported that Allah said, 'If anyone is distracted from asking Me by his own '.remembrance of Me, I will give him better than what I give to those who ask

I called on Allah once and He answered me. I forgot the need because of the fact that when He answers a supplication, His bestowal is far greater and more sublime than what the bondsman desires from Him, even if it be the Garden and its eternal blessings. This is understood only by lovers who act, gnostics, the elite and the select .of Allah

Fasting

The Holy Prophet said, 'Fasting is a protection from the

calamities of this world, and a veil from punishment of the next.' When you fast, intend thereby to restrain yourself from fleshly appetites and to cut off those worldly desires arising from the ideas of Satan and his kind. Put yourself in the position of a sick person who desires neither food nor drink; expect recovery at any moment from the sickness of wrong actions. Purify your inner being of every lie, turbidity, heedlessness and darkness, which might cut you off from the meaning of being .sincere for the sake of Allah

Somebody said to one of the Companions, 'You are already weak; fasting will weaken you further.' 'I am preparing that fast for the evil of a long day,' he said. 'Patience in obeying Allah is easier than patience in His punishment.' And the Messenger of Allah '.once quoted Allah's words, 'Fasting is done for Me, and I am its reward

Fasting kills the desire of the self and the appetite of greed, and from it comes purity of the heart, purification of the limbs, cultivation of the inner and the outer being, thankfulness for blessings, charity to the poor, increase of humble supplication, humility, weeping and most of the ways of seeking refuge in Allah; and it is the reason for the breaking of aspiration, the lightening of evil things, and the redoubling of good deeds. It contains benefits which cannot be counted. It is enough that we mention some of them to the person who understands and is given

.success in making use of fasting, if Allah wills

Abstinence

Abstinence is the key to the door of the next world and freedom from the Fire. It consists of leaving everything which could distract you from Allah without regret, nor feeling proud about leaving it, nor waiting for relief from your renunciation, nor seeking any praise for it. Indeed abstinence means a person considering such things to be of no avail to him: he deems their passing him by as a relief and comfort for him, and their presence as a misfortune for him; thus he always flees from misfortune and clings to what brings him ease and relief. The man of abstinence is the one who chooses the next world. He chooses abasement over might and this world, striving over rest, hunger over being full, the well-being of what is to come later over immediate trials, and remembrance over heedlessness. His self is in this world and his .heart is in the next world

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Love of this world is the fount of every error;' and elsewhere, 'This world is a corpse; whoever seeks it is like a dog.' Do you not see how ?it loves what Allah hates? What error is a greater crime than this

One of the Holy Prophet's family said, 'If all of this world were a morsel in a child's mouth, we would have mercy on him. What then is the state of someone who throws the limits set by Allah behind

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his back, seeking and desiring this world? If the dwelling place of this world had been any good, it would not have shown you mercy, nor answered you, and would have '.bidden you farewell in departure

The Messenger of Allah said, 'When Almighty Allah created this world, He commanded it to obey Him and it obeyed its Lord. He told it, "Oppose the one who seeks you and give success to the one who opposes you." ' It acts according to what Allah charged it .to do, and what He impressed upon its nature

A Description of this World

This world is like a body whose head is pride, whose eyes are avarice, whose ears are greed, whose tongue is dissimulation, whose hand is desire, whose legs are vanity, whose heart is heedlessness, whose being is annihilation, and whose product is .extinction

It brings pride to whoever loves it, avarice to whoever prefers it, greed to whoever seeks it, and cloaks with hypocrisy whoever praises it. It gives vain power over whoever desires it; it leads to heedlessness in the person who relies on it. It seduces whoever admires its goods, but those goods do not last for him. It returns the person .who gathers it and is miserly with it to its own abode, which is the Fire

Reluctance to Act

A person who feels reluctant to act falls short of what is correct, even if he does right; while a person who acts voluntarily is correct, even if he errs. The reluctant one obtains only contempt

in the end, and weariness, toil and misery while he is carrying out the action. The outer being of a reluctant person is showing off, and his inner being is hypocrisy: they are the wings with which he flies. The reluctant person never has any of the qualities of the righteous nor any of the marks of the believers, wherever he is. As Allah said to ,(His Prophet (S

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

Say, I do not ask you for any reward for it; nor am I of those who affect [i.e. act with (reluctance]. (٣٨:٨٧

The Holy Prophet said, 'we, the company of prophets, the fearfully aware, the trusty, we disavow the reluctant.' So, fear Allah and do away with reluctance, and it will mark you with the sign of belief. Do not be occupied with something whose garment is affliction, with food which in the end is emptiness, with an abode whose end is ruin, with wealth whose end is to be inherited by others, with comrades whom in the end one must take leave of, with glory which in the end is abasement, with loyalty which in .the end is abandonment, or with a life whose end is grief

Delusion

A person who is deluded is wretched in this world, and is duped in the next world because he has sold what is better for what is baser. Do not admire yourself. Sometimes you may be deceived by your property and your bodily health

into supposing that you will last forever. Sometimes you are deceived by your long life, your children and your friends into thinking that you will be saved by them. Sometimes you are deceived by your beauty and the circumstances of your birth, which bring you your hopes and desires so easily that you think that you are truthful .and successful in achieving your goal

Sometimes you are deceived by the regret you show people for your shortcoming in worship, but Allah knows the opposite of that is in your heart. Sometimes you make yourself worship in a spirit of reluctance; but Allah desires sincerity. Sometimes you imagine that you are calling on Allah when you are calling on another. Sometimes you imagine that you are giving good counsel to people, while your real desire is that they .bow to you. Sometimes you blame yourself when you are really praising yourself

Know that you will only emerge from the darkness of delusion and desire by sincerely turning in repentance to Almighty Allah, and to whatever you know about Him, and to recognize the faults in your self which are not consistent with your intellect and knowledge, and which the faith, the law and the customary practices of the Holy .Prophet and the Imams of guidance do not tolerate

If you are content with your present condition, there is no one more wretched than you in knowledge and action, nor anyone with a more wasted life. You will inherit grief on the Day of

.Resurrection

A Description of the Hypocrite

The hypocrite is content to be far from the mercy of Allah, because his outward actions appear to be in line with Islamic laws; and yet he is heedless and ineffective, .mocking and transgressing its truthfulness in his heart

The mark of hypocrisy is disregard for lies, treachery, insolence, false claims, insincerity, foolishness, error and lack of modesty, making little of acts of disobedience, desiring believers to lose faith, and making light of misfortunes in the faith; pride, praise, praise of love, love of praise, envy, preferring this world to the next and evil to good, inciting slander, love of amusement, dealing with prevaricators, helping aggressive people avoiding good deeds, disparaging those who do good, considering good the evil done by the hypocrite and recognizing as odious whatever .good another person does; and many other things like that

,Allah has described the hypocrites in more than one place. He said

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

And among men is he who serves Allah [standing] on the verge. So that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, but if a trial afflicts him he turns back headlong; he loses (this world as well as the next; that is a manifest loss. (۲۲:۱۱

,In describing them, Allah said

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ. يُخَادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلاَّ أَنفُسَهُم وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ. فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّهُ

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مَرَضاً وَلَهُم عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

There are some people who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", but they are not at all believers. They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive only themselves while they do not perceive. There is a disease in their hearts, (so Allah added to their disease. (٢:٨-١٠

The Holy Prophet said, 'The hypocrite is he who, having made a promise, breaks it; when he acts, he does evil; when he speaks, he lies; when he is trusted, he betrays; when he is given provision, he is reckless; when it is withheld, he makes much of his '.life

He also said, 'A person whose innermost being contradicts his public face is a hypocrite whoever he is, wherever he is, in whatever time he lives, and whatever rank '.he has

Proper Social Transaction

Behaving correctly with Almighty Allah's creation without disobedience to Him comes from Allah's increased favour to His bondsmen. Whoever is humble to Allah in his .heart behaves well openly

Keep company with people for the sake of Allah, not for your portion of something which belongs to this world or to seek position or for showing off or to increase your .own reputation

Do not cross the limits of the Law for the sake of eminence and fame: they will not

.profit you at all, and you will miss the next world without gaining any benefit

Taking and Giving

A person who prefers taking to giving is deluded, because in his heedlessness he thinks

that what is now is better than what is to come. It behooves the believer, when he takes something, that he should take it rightfully. If he gives, it should be for a right purpose, in a right way, and from his rightful possessions. How many a taker gives up his faith, but he is not aware of that! How many a giver brings down on himself the wrath of Allah!

The matter is not just a question of taking and giving, however; rather he is saved who fears Allah when taking and giving, and who holds tight to the rope of righteousness.

In this regard people are of two types: the elite and the common. The elite considers with painstaking caution and does not take until he is certain that it is permissible. If it is unclear to him, he will only take when it is absolutely necessary. The common man considers only the outward form: he takes whatever he does not find to be stolen or extorted, and says, 'There is no harm in this: it is permissible for me.' Here the matter is clear, and he takes it by the judgement of Almighty Allah and spends it in His pleasure.

Brotherhood

Three things are rare in every age: brotherhood in Allah; a devout, affectionate wife who helps you in Allah's faith; and a rightly guided son. Whoever finds these three things has obtained the good of both abodes and the fullest portion of this world and the next. Beware

of taking someone as a brother when you are moved by greed, fear, inclination, money, food or drink. Seek the fraternity of the Allah-fearing, even to the ends of the earth, and even if you spend your entire life seeking them. Allah has not left anyone better than them after the Prophets on the face of the earth, nor has He given a bondsman any blessing like that of success in finding their company. Allah has said,

الْأَخِلَّاء يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

The friends shall on that day be enemies to one another except those who guard [against evil]. (۴۳:۶۷)

I believe that anyone who looks for a friend without fault in these times will remain without a friend. Do you not see that the first mark of honour which Allah bestowed on His Prophets when their call to faith became known was a trusty friend or helper. Similarly, the most sublime gift which Allah bestowed on His friends, supporters (awliya'), pure friends and trustees was the company of His prophets. This is proof that, after knowledge of Allah, there is no blessing in either abode which is more sublime, more excellent or more pure than company in Allah and brotherhood for His sake.

Consultation

Take counsel in the matters faith demands of you with one who has the following five qualities: intellect, knowledge, experience, good counsel, and precaution. If you find these five things in a person, then make use of them, be resolute and rely on Allah. This will

.lead you to what is correct

As for matters of this world which do not pertain to faith, make decisions about them and then do not think about them further. If you do this, you will obtain the blessings of livelihood and the sweetness of obedience.

Knowledge is obtained through consultation. The man of intellect is he who derives new knowledge from consultation, and that guides him to obtain his goal. Consulting a proper counsellor is like reflecting upon the creation of the heavens and the earth and the destruction of both, since the more intense a person's reflection upon these two things, the deeper he penetrates into the seas of the light of gnosis and the more he increases his understanding and certainty.

Do not take counsel from someone when your intellect does not give him any credence, even if he is famous for his discernment and scrupulousness. When you take counsel from someone your heart trusts, do not disagree with what he advises even if it is contrary to what you want. Surely the self combines both acceptance of the truth with what is opposed to it - that is, on receiving other truths which are clearer to him. Allah has said,

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِی الأَمْرِ

(Take counsel with them in the affair. (۳:۱۵۹

,and again

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

(Their rule is to take counsel among themselves. (۴۲:۳۸

.that is, they consult each other about it

Forbearance

Forbearance is a lamp of Allah which leads the holder to His excellence; a person cannot be forbearing unless he

is aided by the lights of gnosis and tawhid. Forbearance has five facets: when a man is exalted, but is then humbled; when he is truthful, he is accused of being a liar; when he calls people to the truth, he is scorned; when he is injured without having done any .crime; and when he demands his rights and they oppose him

When you have given each of these its due, you have achieved the goal. When you have countered the half-wit by turning away from him and not answering him, people will come to your aid, for he who wages war with a fool is like a man who puts wood .on the fire

The Holy Prophet said, 'The believer is like the earth: people obtain benefits from it while they are on it.' Whoever cannot endure people's harsh rudeness will not reach .Allah's good pleasure, because His pleasure is closely linked with people's antipathy

It is related that a man said to Ahnaf ibn Qays, 'You are causing me to worry.' 'I will .forbear with you,' he replied

The Messenger of Allah said, 'I was sent as a centre of forbearance, a mine of knowledge, and a home for patience.' He spoke the truth when he said, 'True forbearance is when you pardon a person who acts badly with you and opposes you, while you have the power to take revenge on him.' It is as the supplication says: 'My Allah, You are too vast in favour and forbearance to punish me

'.for my action and abase me for my mistake

Following Another's Example

Following the example of another is nothing more than what has been bestowed upon the spirit at its origin, when the light of time was mixed with that of eternity. Following a model, however, does not consist of adopting the marks of outward actions and claiming descent from the awliya' of the faith from among the wise and the Imams. As ,Allah said

يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ

(The day when We will call every people by their Imam. (١٧:٧١

,that is, whoever follows someone with effacement is pure. And elsewhere

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِى الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءلُونَ

So when the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them on (that day, nor shall they ask of each other. (٢٣:١٠١

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Souls are a drafted army. Those who know each other are intimate, and those who do not know each other differ from each other.' Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah was asked who had taught him good manners, and he replied, 'My Lord taught me manners in myself. Whatever I find to be good in people of intelligence and insight I follow and use; whatever I find ugly in the ignorant I avoid and forsake forever. That has brought me to the path of knowledge. There is no

sounder way for the astute believer than to follow the example of others, because it is the clearest path and soundest goal.' And Allah said to Muhammad, the

,greatest of His creation

أُوْلَـئِکَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللّهُ فَبِهُدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ

(These are they whom Allah guided, therefore follow their guidance. (۶:۹۰

,Elsewhere He said

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْکَ أَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

(Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one. (۱۶:۱۲۳

If the faith of Allah had had a path straighter than following a model, He would have .recommended it to His prophets and His supporters

The Holy Prophet said, 'There is a light in the heart which is illuminated only by following the truth and intending towards the right path. It is a part of the light of the '.prophets which has been entrusted in the hearts of the believers

Pardon

Pardoning someone when you have the power to punish is one of the customary practices of the messengers and the secrets of the Allah-fearing. Pardon is when you do not charge your companion for what he has done wrong outwardly, when you forget the cause by which there was inward affliction, and when you extend great .charity in your choice despite having power over him

No one could find a way to that pardon except by the one whom Allah has pardoned and forgiven for the sins which he has committed and the deeds he has put off, and who has been adorned with His mark of honour and clothed in the light of His .radiance

This is because pardon and forgiveness are two of the attributes of Almighty Allah which He entrusted in the secrets of

His pure friends, so that they adopt the manners of their Creator and Maker with ,creation. This is why He said

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

They should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And (Allah is forgiving, merciful. (۲۴:۲۲

If you do not pardon another mortal like yourself, how can you hope for the pardon of ?the Compelling King

The Holy Prophet said that his Lord commanded him to have these qualities, saying, 'Unite with whoever breaks with you, and pardon whoever wrongs you; give to whoever deprives you, and be good to whoever is bad to you.' He commanded us to ,follow him when Allah said

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانتَهُوا

Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, (keep back. (۵۹:۷

Pardon is a secret of Allah in the heart of His select. Whoever is gladdened by it has made Him happy. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Is any of you capable of being like Abu Damdam?' 'O Messenger of Allah,' they said, 'Who is Abu Damdam?' The Holy Prophet replied, 'One of your ancestors who, when he woke up in the morning would say, "O

' ".Allah, I have forgiven the shattering of my honour by the common people

Exhortation

The best form of exhortation is when the words used do not go beyond the limits of truth, and the actions performed do not go beyond the limits of sincerity. The warner

and the warned are like someone awake and someone asleep: whoever awakes from the slumber of his heedlessness, opposition and rebellion does good to awaken .others from that sleep

Anyone who travels in the deserts of transgression and engrosses himself in the wilds of misguidance, abandons his modesty because of his love for reputation, showing off and fame, wasting his time with those who wear the garments of the righteous, his outward appearance divulging the substance, of what is inside of him. In reality he is devoid of any substance and his inner destitution is flooded with love of praise and enveloped in the darkness of greed. How seduced he is by his passion! How he leads ,people astray with his words! As Allah has said

لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَى وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ

(Evil certainly is the guardian and evil certainly is the associate. (۲۲:۱۳

But whoever Allah has protected by the light of tawhid, support, and excellent success, his heart is cleansed of impurity. He does not separate himself from gnosis and precaution; he listens to the words of the misguided while he ignores the speaker himself, whoever he is. The wise have said, 'Take wisdom, even if it comes from the mouths of madmen.' In the words of ‘Isa (‘a), 'Sit with anyone who reminds you of Allah when you see him and meet him, aside from when he talks. Do not sit with someone when your outer being accepts him but your inner being rejects him.' That is someone who lays claim to what

he does not have; if you are sincere, then they will yield to you. When you find someone with these three qualities, then seize the opportunity to see him, meet with him, and sit with him, even if it is only for an hour: this will have an effect on your faith, .your heart, and your worship, through his blessing

If someone's words do not go beyond his actions, whose actions do not go beyond his truthfulness, and whose truthfulness does not contend with his Lord, then sit with him with respect and wait for mercy and blessing. Beware of the proof against you, and make his time in your company pleasant, so that you do not reproach him and lose. Look at him with the eye of Allah's favour upon him, His selecting him and His .honouring him

(Advice (wasiyah

The best of advice and the most necessary is that you do not forget your Lord, and that you remember Him always, and do not rebel against Him, and that you should worship Him whether sitting or standing. Do not be dazzled by His blessings and always be grateful to Him. Do not go out from under the protective cover of His mercy, immensity and majesty, lest you go astray and fall into the field of destruction, even if affliction and adversity touch you and the fires of trials burn you. Know that the afflictions He sends are filled with the eternal marks of His honour, and that the trials He

inflicts bring about His pleasure and nearness, even though it may be after some time. What blessings there are for the person who has knowledge, and who is granted success therein!

It is related that when someone asked the Messenger of Allah for advice, he said, 'Never get angry, for anger contains opposition to your Lord. Beware of making excuses, for they contain hidden polytheism. Say your prayers like someone saying farewell, for it contains a link to Allah and nearness to Him. Be modest before Allah as you are modest before the righteous among your neighbours, for this contains increased certainty.'

Allah has gathered up the advice of all our ancestors, both distant and near, into one single characteristic and that is Precaution (taqwa)

In the words of Almighty Allah,

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُواْ اللّهَ

Certainly We enjoined those who were given the Book before you, and [We enjoin] you too that you should be careful of [your duty]. (۴:۱۳۱)

This is the sum of every sound act of worship: it is by precaution that people reach the high degrees and highest ranks. It is by precaution that people lead a good life with constant companionship.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِى جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ فِى مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

Surely those who guard [against evil] shall be in gardens and rivers, in the seat of honour with a most powerful King. (۵۴:۵۴-۵)

Trustful Reliance

Trust (tawakkul) is a cup sealed with Allah: none may drink from it or break the seal save the trustful.

,It is as Allah said

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

On Allah should the trustful rely, (۱۴:۱۲) and

وَعَلَى اللّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُواْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ

(On Allah should you rely if you are believers. (۵:۲۳

Allah made trust the key of belief, and belief the lock of trust. The reality of trust is preferring others to oneself; the root of preferring others is to advance the other person's claim. He who trusts continues to affirm one of two preferences in his trust. If he prefers what is caused (i.e. phenomenal being), he is veiled by it. If he prefers the Causer of the cause of trust (i.e. the Creator, glory be to Him and may He be exalted!), he remains with Him. If you want to be a man of trust and not a man of causes, then say the takbir over your ruh five times, and bid farewell to all your hopes as death bids .farewell to life

The lowest level of trust is nothing more than placing your highest aspiration before your own advancement; moreover, you should neither seek for your own portion nor look for what you lack, for either of those things would break the bond of your belief while you are unaware. If you are truly determined to live by one of the marks of the trusting one, and by His trust with respect to one of these two preferences, then cling to this story for support. It is related that one of the men of trust came to one of the Imams

and said to him, 'Show me compassion by answering a question about trust.' The Imam knew the man to be of excellent trust and rare scrupulousness, and he saw his sincerity in what he was asking before the man actually put the question. 'Stay where you are and wait with me for awhile,' he told him. While he was formulating his .answer a poor man passed by

The Imam put his hand into his pocket and, taking something out, gave it to the poor man. Then he turned to the man who had asked the question and said, 'Come and ask about what you have seen.' 'O Imam,' the man said, 'I know that you could have given me the answer to my question before making me wait. Why then did you delay?' And the Imam replied, 'Belief means reflecting on the meaning before I speak. For how could I be negligent of my innermost being when my Lord perceives it? How could I discuss the science of trust while there is a coin in my pocket? It is not permitted for me to discuss that until after I had given it to him, so understand!' The questioner sighed deeply and swore that he would not seek shelter in a house nor rely on .another mortal as long as he lived

Respect for One's Brothers

The reason why brothers in the faith shake hands is Allah's love for them. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Whenever brethren shake hands in Allah, their wrong actions

are dispersed so that they become as they were on the day their mothers bore them.' No two brothers' love and respect for each other increases without there being increase for each of them also. It is obligatory for the one having most knowledge of Allah's faith among the two to stimulate his friend to perform the obligatory functions which Allah has made necessary, and to guide him in going straight, in contentment and moderation, to give him the good news of Allah's mercy and to make him fear His punishment. The other brother must seek the blessing of his guidance and hold to what he calls him to, adhere to his admonition, and be guided by him, all the while .seeking protection in Allah and seeking His help and success

Isa (‘a) was once asked, 'How are you this morning?' To which he replied, 'I do not‘ possess the benefit which I hope for, nor can I repel what I am on my guard against, while I am commanded to obey and forbidden to rebel. I do not think that any pauper is poorer than I am.' And when Uways al-Qarani was asked the same question, he said, 'How is a man in the morning when he does not know if he will be alive in the '?evening, and in the evening he does not know if he will be alive in the morning

Abu Dharr said, 'In the morning I thank my Lord and I thank myself.' The Holy Prophet

said, 'Whoever wakes up in the morning aspiring for something other than Allah has '.become among the losers and transgressors

Striving and Discipline

Bliss belongs to the bondsman who strives for Allah against his own nature and passions: he who then defeats his passion wins Allah's pleasure, and the one whose intellect leaves behind the self which commands evil through his striving jihad, submission and humility in the service of Allah has won a great victory. There is no veil between the bondsman and Allah which is darker or more desolate than that of self and passion; there is no better weapon to fight and destroy them than total need of .Allah, glory be to Him, fear, hunger, thirst in the day and wakefulness at night

When a person possessing these traits dies, he dies a martyr. If he lives according to .the straight path, his end will take him to the greatest pleasure of Allah

,Allah said

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And [as for] those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in our (ways, and Allah is most surely with the doers of good. (۲۹:۶۹

When you see someone striving harder than you, upbraid yourself, and reproach yourself in order to encourage yourself to do more. Put a halter of command and rein of prohibition on the self, and carry on as if you were a trainer who does not let his .mount take a step unless it is completely correct

The Messenger of Allah used to

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pray until his feet were swollen. He would say, 'How can I not be a thankful slave?' The Holy Prophet wanted to make his community consider this so that they would not neglect striving, toil, and discipline in any state. If you were to experience the sweetness of worshipping Allah, to see it's blessing and be illuminated by its light, you would not be patient without it for a single hour, even if you were to be cut to pieces. No one turns away from it without being denied such benefits of protection and .success from Allah as were attained by his forefathers

Rabi' ibn Khuthaym was asked why he did not sleep at night. 'Because I fear to spend .the night in sleep,' he replied

Contemplation of Death

Contemplating death kills desire, cuts off the roots of heedlessness and strengthens .the heart with Allah's promise of life hereafter

It refines nature, breaks the signs of passion, extinguishes the fire of greed and renders this world vile; this is the meaning of the Holy Prophet's words: 'To reflect for an hour is better than a year of worship.' That hour of reflecting is the moment when you unite the ropes binding you to this world and fasten them to the next. The descent of mercy from Heaven never ceases when death is remembered in this way. If a person does not reflect on death, and on his own lack of any means to escape it, on his great incapacity, on the length of time

he will spend in the grave and his bewilderment at the Resurrection, there is no good .in him

The Holy Prophet said, 'Remember the destroyer of pleasures.' When asked what that was, he replied, 'Death. Whenever one of Allah's servants remembers this when he is wealthy, this world is constricted for him. Whenever he remembers it in hardship, it is expanded for him.' Death is the first station of the next world and the last station of this world. Blessed is he who shows himself generous and benefits at .the beginning, and blessed is he who has done his best at the end

Death is the closest thing to accompany the son of Adam, although he deems it to be the furthest away. How much man inflicts on himself? What weaker creature is there? .In death lies the rescue of the sincere and the destruction of the wrongdoers

That is why some yearn for death while others hate it. The Holy Prophet said, 'If a person loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and if a person hates to meet '.Allah, the Allah hates to meet him

Good Opinion

The root of good opinion is a man's belief and the soundness of his heart; the sign of good opinion is that whenever he looks, he sees with the eye of purity and virtue wherever he goes, and modesty, trustworthiness, protection and truthfulness are cast into his heart. The Holy Prophet said, 'Have a good opinion of your brothers: through that you will

gain purity of heart and firmness of nature.' And Ubayy ibn Ka'b said, 'When you see a quality which you disapprove of in one of your brothers, then give it seventy interpretations and see if your heart can be at peace with one of them. If it is not, then blame yourself if you cannot excuse him. If you yourself have a quality which will easily make for seventy interpretations, then you should disapprove of yourself more than you do of him.' As Allah revealed to David, 'Remind My slaves of My blessings and My favours. They have only seen exquisite goodness from Me so they should only expect that what remains will be like what they have already had from Me.' Good opinion invites good worship. A person who is deluded continues to remain in rebellion even while he hopes for forgiveness. The best opinion in Allah's creation is reserved .for those who obey Him, hope for His reward and fear His punishment

The Messenger of Allah said, relating from his Lord, 'I am with My slave's good opinion of Me, O Muhammad.' Whoever fails to live up to the reality of the gifts which come from his opinion of his Lord has intensified the proof against himself, and is among .those who are deceived by the shackles of his passion

Entrusting Oneself to Allah

The one who entrusts his affair to Allah is in eternal rest and constant carefree ease of life; he is above caring about anything except Allah, as the

Commander of the Faithful said, I was content with what Allah allotted me, and I entrusted my affair to my Creator. As Allah was good in what has passed, so He will be .good in what remains

,As Allah said, in the words of a believer among the people of Pharaoh

وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِى إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ. فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ

I entrust my affair to Allah, surely Allah sees the servants". So Allah protected him" from the evil consequences of what they planned and the most evil punishment (overtook Pharaoh's people. (۴۰:۴۴...۵

The Arabic word for entrustment (tafwid) consists of five letters, each letter having an injunction. He who heeds their commands brings the ta of his abandoning (tark) plans in this world; the fa of the annihilation (fana) of every aspiration other than Allah; the waw of fulfilling (wafa) the contract and confirming the promise; the ya of despairing (ya's) of yourself, and certainty (yaqin) in your Lord; and the dad of a conscience (damir) which is purely for Allah, and of the need (darurah) for Him. He who entrusts everything to Allah wakes up in the morning free of all evils, and at night sleeps .protected in his faith

Certainty

Certainty will take the bondsman to every sublime state and every wondrous station; thus did the Messenger of Allah make known the immensity of certainty when he mentioned that 'Isa ('a) walked on water. He said, 'If he had had more certainty, he

could have walked on air.' By this he indicated that in spite of the majesty of the place which the prophets have with Allah, they also have different ranks according to their .certainty

Certainty is ever increasing, and remains so throughout eternity. Believers also vary in the strength and weakness of their certainty. A person whose certainty is strong may be recognised by the fact that he finds himself stripped of all ability and power other than what Allah has given him, and by his keeping to Allah's command and worship .both outwardly and inwardly

He considers the states of having and not having, increase and decrease, praise and blame, might and abasement, all to be the same because he considers them all on an equal level. However, a person who weakens his certainty attaches himself to external matters, and allows his self free rein therein. He follows the customs and sayings of people without substantiating them, and strives in the affairs of this world, accumulating its wealth and holding on to it, acknowledging and affirming it with his .tongue

There is no withholder or giver except Allah, and the slave can only obtain what he is provided with and allotted. Effort will not increase provision, but he disavows that by ,his action and his heart. In Allah's words

يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِم مَّا لَيْسَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ

They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts; and Allah best knows what they (conceal. (٣:١٦٧

Allah was compassionate to His

bondsmen when He gave them permission to earn money however they might as long as they do not exceed the limits of Allah or abandon their obligations to Him and the behaviour of His Prophet in any of their actions, or abandon the spirit of trust or become caught in the field of greed. But when they forget this, attaching themselves to the opposite of what has been delineated for them, they are counted among the destroyed, who at the end have nothing but false claims. Not everyone who earns is necessarily trustful: from his earnings he brings for himself only what is forbidden or doubtful. He may be recognized by the effect his gains have upon him, by his .insatiable hunger, and how he spends for this world without let

He who is given permission to earn is one whose self gains while his heart trusts in Allah. If he has a lot of money, he is like a trustee who knows that having property and not having it is the same thing. If he withholds it, he withholds for Allah; and if he .spends it, he does so in the way Allah has commanded. Both are for Allah

Fear and Hope

Fear is the custodian of the heart, and hope is the intercessor of the self; whoever knows Allah fears Him and sets his hopes in Him. They are the wings of belief with which the true servant flies to Allah's pleasure. They are the eyes of his intellect, with which

he sees Allah's promise and threat; fear contemplates the justice of Allah through careful awareness of that threat. Hope calls for Allah's overflowing favour and gives life to the heart, while fear kills the self. The Messenger of Allah said, 'The believer has '.two kinds of fear: fear of what has passed and fear of what is to come

In the death of the self lies the life of the heart, which leads to firmness in practice. Whoever worships Allah with a balance of fear and hope will not be misguided, and will obtain what he hopes for. How can a slave be anything other than fearful when he does not know at what action his record will be closed, while he has to his credit no deed capable of helping him, no power to do anything, nor any place to fly to? How can he fail to hope when he knows that despite his incapacity he is drowned in the seas of Allah's blessings and favours, which cannot be counted or numbered? The lover worships his Lord with hope by contemplating his own state with the eye of .wakefulness; and the abstinent worships with fear

Uways al-Qarani said to Haram ibn Hayyan, 'People act in hope.' 'But you act in fear,' Haram replied. There are two types of fear: permanent and changing. Permanent fear brings about hope, while changing fear brings about permanent fear. Similarly, there are two types of hopes: concealed and open. Concealed hope brings about permanent fear, which

strengthens the connection of love; while open hope fulfils a man's expectations .regarding his incapacity and shortcomings in the things he has done during his life

Contentment

Contentment is when a person is content with what he loves and what he hates; it is a ray of the light of gnosis. He who is content is annihilated to all his choices; he is really the one with whom Allah is content. Contentment is a name which contains the .meanings of servitude, and maybe described as the joy of the heart

I heard my father, Muhammad al-Baqir, say, 'To attach the heart to what is present is association (shirk), and to what is not there is disbelief (kufr): these are the wings of heedlessness.' I am amazed at anyone who claims to be a slave to Allah and then contends with Him over His decrees. Content gnostics ('arifin) are far from being like '.that

Affliction

Affliction is an adornment for the believer and a mark of honour for the man of intellect, because facing it directly needs steadfastness and firm-footedness, both of which confirm belief. The Holy Prophet said, 'We, the company of the prophets, are the people who have the hardest trials, then after us come the believers, then the '.others like them

Whoever tastes the food of affliction while under Allah's protection enjoys it more than he enjoys Allah's blessing. He yearns for it when it is not there, because the lights of blessing lie under the balance of affliction and

trial, and the balance of affliction and trial lies under the lights of blessing. Many are delivered from affliction and then destroyed in blessing. Allah praised none of His bondsmen, from Adam up to Muhammad, until He had tested him and seen how he fulfilled the duty of worship while in affliction. Allah's marks of honour come, in fact, at .the last stage, but the afflictions themselves come in the beginning

Whoever leaves the path of affliction is ignoring the lamp of the believers, the beacon of those near to Allah, and the guide for those on the right path. There is no good in a slave who complains of a single trial preceded by thousands of blessings and followed by thousands of comforts. Whoever does not show the patience required in affliction is deprived of thankfulness in the blessings he receives. Similarly, whoever does not give the thankfulness owed for blessings is denied the patience owed in affliction. .Whoever is denied both of them is an outcast

Ayyub said in his supplication, 'O Allah, verily seventy comforts and ease did not come '.to me until You sent me seventy afflictions

And Wahb ibn Munabbih said, 'Affliction to a believer is like a bit to a horse and a halter to a camel.' Ali said, 'Steadfastness in relation to belief is like the head to the body. The head of steadfastness is afflictions but only those who act righteously understand '.that

Patience

Patience reveals whatever light and purity there is in the innermost

being of Allah's servants, while anxiety shows up the darkness and bereftness inside them. Everyone claims to be patient, but only the humble are firm in it. Everyone denies his anxiety, although it is quite obvious in a hypocrite because the onset of .trials and afflictions tells you who is truthful and who is a liar

Patience is a sensation that continuously prevails in one's consciousness, but what occurs upon a sudden upset cannot be called patience. Anxiety is what disturbs the heart and brings the person sorrow, changing his complexion and his state. Every event whose beginnings are without humility, repentance, and humble supplication to Allah comes from someone who is anxious, not someone who is patient. The beginning of patience is bitter, but its end is sweet for some people; but for others both its beginning and end are bitter. Whoever enters it at its end has entered it. Whoever enters it from its beginning has left it. A person who knows the value of .patience cannot bear to be without it

,In the story of Moses and Khidr Allah said

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خُبْرًا

How can you have patience in that of which you have no comprehensive knowledge? ((١٨:۶٨

Whoever is unwillingly patient, who does not complain to people and does not become anxious when his veil is rent, is counted among the common people. His share is as ,Allah said

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

(Give good news to the patient, (۲:۱۵۵)

That is, good news of the Garden and forgiveness. Whoever

meets affliction with an open heart, showing patience with tranquility and dignity, is counted among the elite and his portion is as Allah said,

إِنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

(Surely Allah is with the patient. (۸:۴۶)

Sorrow

Sorrow is one of the marks of the gnostics, through the magnitude of what comes to them of the Unseen when they are in seclusion, and the intensity of their glorification of Allah. The outer being of the sorrowful is contraction and his inner being is expansion.

He lives with men contentedly, in a life of nearness to Allah. The sorrowful person is not a man of reflection, because he who reflects is forced to do so, while a sorrowful person is so by nature. Sorrow comes from within, and reflection begins by seeing phenomena—there is a difference between them.

Allah said in the story of Jacob,

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّى وَحُزْنِى إِلَى اللّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّهِ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

I only complain of my grief and sorrow to Allah, and I know [from Allah] what you do not know. (۱۲:۸۶)

This is because the knowledge gained in the state of sorrow is particular to him, and Allah has singled him out for it and left the rest of the world deprived. When Rabi' ibn Khuthaym was asked why he was sorrowful, he replied, 'Because I have demands made on me. At the right of sorrow stands contrition, and at the left of it stands '. silence. Sorrow is a mark of the gnostics of Allah

Reflection is shared by both the elite

and the common folk. If sorrow were to be veiled from the hearts of the gnostics for an hour, they would have to seek help; but if it were to be placed in the hearts of others, they would dislike it. Sorrow is first, while second comes security and good news. Reflection comes second, following the establishment of one's belief in and utter need of Allah by one's seeking rescue with Him. The sorrowful person reflects, and he who reflects takes note. Each of them has a state, a science, a path, .forbearance and honour

Modesty

Modesty is a light whose essence is the heart of belief, meaning careful consideration in everything which is denounced by tawhid and gnosis. The Holy Prophet said, 'Modesty is part of belief.' That is to say, modesty is accepted through belief, and belief is accepted through modesty. The modest person is all good. Whoever is denied modesty is all evil, even if he worships and is scrupulous. One step taken with modesty in the courtyards of Allah's awe is better than seventy years of worship. .Insolence, however, is the beginning of hypocrisy, schism and disbelief

The Messenger of Allah said, 'If you have no shame, then do as you like.' This means that when modesty leaves you, then you are punished for all the good or evil that you do. The strength of modesty comes from sorrow and fear, and modesty is the home of fear. The beginning of modesty is awe, and its end

is clear vision. A modest person is occupied with his own affairs, withdrawn from people, and distant from what they are doing, even if they all forsake completely .person with modesty

The Messenger of Allah said, 'When Allah desires good for a bondsman, he makes him forget his good qualities, putting his evil qualities before his eyes and making him dislike sitting with those who turn away from the remembrance of Allah.' Modesty is of five kinds: shame for a wrong action; shame for one's incapacity; modesty in the face of a noble equality; the modesty of love, and the modesty of awe. Each of these has .its adherents, who are ranked according to these categories of modesty

(Gnosis (ma 'rifah

The person of the gnostic ('arif) is with the people, while his heart is with Allah. If his heart were to forget Allah for the time it takes to blink an eye, he would die of yearning for Him. The gnostic is the trustee over the happenings of Allah, the treasury of His secrets, the repository of his lights, the proof of His mercy to creation, the instrument of His sciences and the measure of His favour and justice. He needs neither people, nor a goal, or nor this world. He has no intimate except Allah, nor any speech, gesture or breath except by Allah, with Allah, and from Allah, for he frequents the garden of His sanctity and is enriched by His subtlest favours to him. Gnosis is a root whose

.branch is belief

Love of Allah

When love of Allah takes possession of the innermost being of Allah's bondsman, it empties him of every preoccupation except remembrance of Allah. The lover is the most inwardly sincere of all people for Allah. He is the most truthful in his words, the most faithful in his pledge, the most astute in his actions, the purest in remembrance, .and the greatest in devoting his self in worship

The angels compete with each other to converse with him, and boast of having seen him. Through him Allah makes His lands flourish, and by His regard, Allah honours His slaves. Allah gives to people when they ask Him by his right, and removes afflictions from them by His mercy. If people knew how they stand with Allah, they would not try .to draw near to Allah save by the dust of his feet

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'Love of Allah is a fire which does not pass by anything without burning it up; the light of Allah does not come over something .without illuminating it

The skies of Allah do not cause a cloud to appear without it covering whatever is beneath it; the wind of Allah does not blow on something without it moving. Allah's water gives life to everything, and from Allah's earth everything grows. Whoever '.loves Allah is given every possession and authority

The Holy Prophet said, 'When Allah loves a slave in my community, He casts love of

,him into the hearts of His friends

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’.the spirits of the angels and the keepers of His throne, so that they love him

That lover truly has an abundance of bliss, and will be able to intercede with Allah on '.the Day of Resurrection

Love for the Sake of Allah

He who loves for the sake of Allah is beloved of Allah, and he who is loved for the sake of Allah is also beloved of Allah, since each loves the other for the sake of Allah. The Messenger of Allah said, 'Man is with whom he loves. Whoever loves a bondsman in Allah, loves Allah. No one loves Allah except he whom Allah loves.' And again, 'The best of people after the prophets in this world and the next are those who love each other for Allah.' Every love based on some cause other than Allah brings about enmity except for these two, for they come from the same source. Theirs always increases ,and never decreases. As Allah said

الْأَخِلَّاء يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

The friends shall on that day be enemies to one another except for those who guard (against evil, (۴۳:۶۷

.because the root of love is being free of everything except the Beloved

The Commander of the Faithful said, 'The best thing in the Garden and the sweetest is ,love of Allah, love in Allah, and praise for Allah.' And Allah has said

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

(The last of their supplication shall be "Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds", (۱۰:۱۰

because when they see the blessings that exist

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in the Garden, love is aroused in their hearts and then they call out, 'Praise be to Allah, '.Lord of the worlds

Yearning

He who yearns neither desires food, nor finds pleasure in drink, nor is he quickly excitable, nor is he intimate even with his close friends, nor does he seek refuge in a house, nor does he dwell in a city, nor wear a garment nor take rest enough for his .need

He worships Allah night and day, hoping to reach the object of his yearning. He speaks to Him with the tongue of yearning, declaring what is in his innermost being. This is as :Allah said of Moses when he met his Lord

وَعَجِلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى

(I hastened to thee, my Lord, that Thou mightest be pleased. (۲۰:۸۴

The Holy Prophet explained his state as follows: 'He neither ate, drank, slept nor desired any of that in his coming or going for forty days, out of his yearning for his '.Lord

When you enter the arena of yearning, then say takbir for yourself and your desires in this world. Bid farewell to all familiar things, and turn from all except the One you desire most. Say the word Labbayk ('At Your service') between your life and your death: 'At Your service, O Allah, at Your service!' Then Allah will make your reward great. A person who yearns is like a drowning man: he is only concerned with being .saved, and forgets every thing else

Wisdom

Wisdom is the light of

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gnosis, the measure of fearful awareness and the fruit of truthfulness. Allah has not given any of his servants a greater, more favourable, generous, lofty or more splendid blessing than wisdom for the heart. In Allah's words,

يُؤتِى الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاء وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيراً

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases and whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good and none but the men of understanding remember. (۲:۲۶۹)

That is, only the one whom I have singled out for My sake and whom I have designated for it knows what wisdom I have reserved and prepared. Wisdom is rescue, steadiness at the beginning of the affair and a firm stance at the end. It makes Allah's creatures aspire to Him. And the Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali, 'That Allah should guide one of His slaves at your hands is better for you than everything the sun shines upon, from east to west.'

Making Claims

In reality the claim belongs to the prophets, the Imams and the truthful, and a man who makes a claim improperly is like the accursed Iblis. He lays claim to devoutness while in reality he contends with his Lord and opposes His command.

Whoever makes such claims reveals his lie, and the liar is not trustworthy; whoever claims what is not lawful for him has the gates of affliction opened for him. Anyone who makes a claim will doubtless be asked for clear proof, upon which he is shown to be

bankrupt and disgraced. The truthful person is not asked the reason for his actions; '.as 'Ali said, 'No one sees a truthful person without being in awe of him

Taking Heed

The Messenger of Allah said, 'He who learns his lessons in this world lives in it like a man asleep: he sees it but does not touch it. Abhorrence is increased in his heart and in his self by the behaviour of those who are deceived by this world, which can only bring the reckoning and punishment. He exchanges that world for what will bring him near to Allah's pleasure and pardon. He washes himself free of those things to which the world invites him, and of its worldly adornments, with the water of the world's .extinction

Taking heed brings three things to the person who does so: knowledge of what he does, acting by what he knows, and knowledge of what he does not know. The root of taking heed lies in one's fear of its outcome, when he sees that he has fully realized abstinence at the beginning. Taking heed is only successful for those who have purity .and insight

,Allah said

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِى الْأَبْصَارِ

(Take a lesson, O you who have eyes! (۵۹:۲

,and again

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِى فِى الصُّدُورِ

For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the (breasts. (۲۲:۴۶

When Allah opens the eye of someone's heart and insight by means of consideration, then He has

.given him a high station and an immense fortune

Contentedness

If a man of contentedness were to swear that he would eventually be in charge of his two abodes, Allah would confirm him in that, realizing his hope through the immensity of his contentment. How can Allah's servant not be content with what He has allotted ,him when He says

نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُم مَّعِيشَتَهُمْ فِى الْحَيَاهِ الدُّنْيَا

We distribute among them their livelihood between them in the life of this world. ((۴۳:۳۲

Whoever yields to Allah, and is not heedless in affirming Him in what He wishes and whenever He wishes, whoever has certainty of His lordship ascribes of necessity the allotment of each man's provision directly to Himself, and does not recognize the reality of causes. Whoever is content with what is allotted is relieved of care, grief and fatigue. Whenever he decreases in contentment, he increases in desire. Greed for this world is the root of every evil; the person who has it is not saved from the Fire unless .he repents

That is why the Holy Prophet said, 'Contentment is a kingdom which does not vanish.' It is the ship of Allah's pleasure, bearing whoever is on board it to His House. Have excellent trust in what you have not been given, and pleasure in what you have been .given. Be patient in what befalls you, for this indeed is one of the greatest tasks

Slander

Slander is forbidden to all Muslims, and he who slanders has sinned in every

instance. Slander is when you mention something about a person which is not a fault .in Allah's eyes, or when you censure what the people of knowledge praise

As for discussing someone who is not present with regard to something which Allah censures, when that person is guilty of it, then this does not amount to slander, even if he dislikes it when he hears it; and you are free of any slight of that person. This is in order to make the truth clear from the false by the clarification of Allah and His Messenger. However, this has a precondition, in that the person who says it must seek only to clarify what is true and false, in the faith of Allah. If he means to deprecate the person of whom he talks without meaning to make things clear, then .he is taken to task for his corrupt goal, even if he is correct in what he says

If you really slander someone, then seek pardon from that person. If you do not go that far nor reach that point, then ask Allah's forgiveness for that. Slander eats up good deeds as fire eats up wood. As Allah revealed to Moses, 'The slanderer will be the last to enter the Garden, if he repents. If he does not repent, then he will be the ,first to enter the Fire.' As He said

أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ

?Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother

(You would hate it. (۴۹:۱۲

The various aspects of slander occur when you mention a fault in someone's .character, intellect, action, behaviour, belief, ignorance and so on

The origin of slander may be one of ten types: venting one's anger, pleasing other people, suspicion, believing a report without investigating it, having a bad opinion, envy, mockery, astonishment at some action in another which one does not comprehend, dissatisfaction or impatience with others, and embellishment of oneself .at the expense of others

If you seek Islam, then remember the Creator and not the created; then the circumstances of slander will be a lesson for you, and a wrong action will be replaced .by a reward

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

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